



Preventing and Ending Homelessness in Chester County

Chester County Decade to Doorways

Crisis Response System Residency Guidelines (Out of County Policy)

July 30, 2018 – Policy #2

Context

Communities throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania are transforming their housing crisis response systems through single point of entry centralized intake and coordinated assessment services with the goal of helping families and individuals who are homeless or at-risk for homelessness to find shelter and achieve permanent housing stability more effectively given limited funding and other resources. In late 2013, government, philanthropic and community leaders from Bucks, Chester and Montgomery Counties came together to establish and adopt in good faith a common standard for serving out of county residents. It is their hope that other neighboring counties will adopt these joint guidelines as a step towards streamlining services and support for residents experiencing a housing crisis. Since then, Chester County has adjusted its guidelines to reflect a Housing First mentality and remove barriers to serving the most vulnerable.

Chester County Decade to Doorways Response System Residency Guidelines

People seeking homeless assistance typically have better and more viable support systems in their County of origin. Discerning residency in the homeless population can be a challenge. The following guidelines have been drafted to inform decision making when verifying residency in the homeless population.

- To be considered for housing and homeless assistance services in Chester County, a person must be calling 2-1-1 from within the County. If they are calling from outside of the County, they will be immediately referred to the coordinated assessment provider in that region.
 - Exceptions to this policy would include Chester County residents that are currently in a hospital, or other treatment setting outside of Chester County.
- If an individual or family calls 2-1-1 from Chester County but discloses during the intake process that their last residence was outside in Chester County, 2-1-1 staff will conduct robust diversion with this household to assist them in returning back to their County/State of origin.
 - If it is determined that the household is not from Chester County by the Street Outreach Team, diversion will be conducted. This can include but is not limited to providing financial assistance for transportation.

- Persons whose last residence was outside of Chester County will not be placed on an Emergency Shelter List outside the following exceptions:
 - **The individual or family reports that they are fleeing domestic violence (Category 4 of HUD’s Definition of Homelessness – see attached).** These cases should be immediately referred to the Domestic Violence Center of Chester County (DVCCC). If there are no units available through DVCCC, the individual or family can be placed on the VI-SPDAT queue to be considered for emergency housing resources. Note that ConnectPoints staff should ask for the caller to sign DVCCC’s “Consent to Release Personal Information” to verify that the caller contacted DVCCC to remain on the queue.
 - **The individual or family is literally homeless (Category 1 of HUD’s Definition of Homelessness) and it is determined by the Street Outreach Team that the individual or family is now in Chester County through no fault of their own.**
 - Examples of this scenario could be a veteran that was discharged from the VA Medical Center and cannot return home or the individual or family was discharged from an institutional setting in Chester County and cannot return home (this information should be confirmed by ConnectPoints staff and documentation uploaded to CCCIMS). Even in these cases, every effort should be made to assist the individual or family to return to their original place of origin through robust diversion efforts. If after all reasonable efforts to divert the individual or family have been made (documented in CCCIMS), but they can still not return home, they may be added to an Emergency Shelter List.
 - **The individual or family comes to Chester County to take refuge from a natural disaster as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), cannot return to their place of origin due to safety issues and has no other available resources to assist them in securing temporary or permanent housing (or those resources have been exhausted).** Note that documentation confirming the individual or family’s status must be provided and uploaded to CCCIMS in order to be considered under this exception.
- **The above mentioned examples are the only exceptions to the Chester County Decade to Doorways Response System Residency Guidelines.** All other individuals or families that are not from Chester County will be referred to the Coordinated Entry program from their place of origin. A client simply getting Medicaid benefits in Chester County or the fact that they are working with an organization in Chester County will not supersede the policies above. Outlier or special circumstances not accounted for in the policy should be brought to the attention of the Department of Community Development.

Please contact Gene Suski, Community Services Manager, Chester County Department of Community Development at 610-344-6900 or by e-mail at gsuski@chesco.org if you have any questions.