



*Preventing and Ending Homelessness in Chester County*

## **Chester County Decade to Doorways**

### **Pregnant Persons and Households with Infants Experiencing Homelessness**

#### **Policy**

#### **June 19, 2018 - Policy #3**

Women that are currently experiencing **literal homelessness (Category 1 of HUD's Definition of Homelessness – see attached) that has been confirmed by the Street Outreach Team** and report a documented pregnancy or households who have an infant or young child (24 months old or under) will automatically be given top priority on the Emergency Family Shelter List, regardless of their VI-SPDAT score. The following is the process that should take place for this population:

- Anyone needing to gain access to the Emergency Shelter system must contact 2-1-1 to be assessed and referred to the Street Outreach Team.
- A woman with no children who reports being pregnant when calling 2-1-1 will be assessed, and referred to the Street Outreach Team to have her homeless status confirmed. If the woman is sleeping outside or in a place not meant for human habitation, she placed on the Single Women's' Emergency Shelter List. **Street Outreach staff will make a direct referral via telephone or e-mail to Safe Harbor, Inc. Women's' Shelter** if beds are available. Safe Harbor staff will prioritize this woman for emergency shelter placement and offer her an available bed. If an emergency shelter bed is not available at Safe Harbor, Inc., **Street Outreach staff has the discretion to administer a hotel/motel voucher, on a case by case basis in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the consumer.**
- **Note: When emergency shelter becomes available, the individual must leave the hotel and accept the shelter referral. Failure to accept emergency shelter will lead to loss of the hotel voucher.**
  - It is expected that Safe Harbor, Inc. Women's' Shelter and the Emergency Family Shelter providers (Friends Association and the CYWA) will collaborate in order to ensure the transition of a person who is close to giving birth to a family shelter as soon as possible.
- A woman who is pregnant and has other children or a household with infant or young child (24 months old or under) will be assessed and have their homeless status confirmed by ConnectPoints. If the individual or household meets the literal homeless criteria listed above, **ConnectPoints staff will make a direct referral via telephone or e-mail to one of the Emergency Family Shelters (Friends Association or the CYWA)** if beds are available. If an Emergency Family Shelter unit is not available; **ConnectPoints staff will make a direct referral to Friend's Association for an Emergency Hotel Voucher** where the family will stay until they are placed in formal Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, or Permanent Housing (with or without subsidy\*). **As noted for individuals, when emergency shelter becomes available, the family must leave the hotel and accept the shelter referral. Failure to accept emergency shelter will lead to loss of the hotel voucher.**

- If a pregnant woman is placed in a hotel and gives birth prior to receiving placement into formal Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, or Permanent Housing; they will return to the hotel until such time as they can be placed into more stable housing. Any agency providing hotel vouchers to this population will make the necessary referrals to ensure the best care possible for the mother and child (Social Security, Medicaid, Maternal and Child Health Consortium, Chester County Health Department Home Visiting Program, etc...)
- Any woman who reports being pregnant when calling ConnectPoints and/or households that report having an infant aged 12 months or under that do not fit the HUD Category 1 definition of homeless but are “precariously housed” (doubled up, in temporary housing, etc..) are not to be placed on the VI-SPDAT queue but instead will be placed on a **“precariously housed pregnant women” or “precariously housed households with an infant” queue in CCCIMS**. This will allow agencies that provide supportive services to this population to be made aware of and reach out to them for possible assistance.
  - **Note that these queues will not be monitored by DCD and that providers that work with this population are expected to contact and work with these women and/or households as appropriate. This includes removing them from the queue(s) if their situations are resolved.**

\* Rapid Re-Housing, Continuum of Care funding, and Section 8 Vouchers, will play a vital role in assisting these women and households in getting into Permanent Housing. It is imperative that the Emergency Shelters and all agencies that provide hotel vouchers for this population complete a SDPA as soon as possible.

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](mailto:gsuski@chesco.org) if you have any questions.