

**Multnomah County**  
**Aging, Disability & Veterans Services Division**  
**Safety Net Program**

**Emergency Housing Assistance Program Guidelines**

**PURPOSE:** Provide funds to clients of the ADVSD network who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or need to move because their current housing poses an immediate and significant health risk. Funds are provided so individuals can maintain or access safe, stable housing. *Please note that Emergency Shelter assistance and assistance for community based supportive housing is covered in a separate policy.*

*Access to this program is contingent upon availability of limited funds. If demand exceeds capacity/budget, ADVSD reserves the right to limit or terminate program services.*

**ELIGIBILITY:**

To be eligible for assistance, an applicant must be a resident of Multnomah County (to meet the residency requirement, the applicant must have continuously lived in Multnomah County for at least sixty days prior to the request and have the intent to remain a resident of Multnomah County indefinitely; this program is not intended to assist individuals in establishing residency in Multnomah County) and:

1. Must be a client of the ADVSD Services network. This includes all programs within ADVSD (e.g. Long Term Care, Adult Protective Services, Oregon Project Independence). Individuals 60 years or older, or having a long term disability determination through Social Security or the Veterans Administration (70% or greater rating) are presumed to be clients of the Network.
2. Have a need for assistance based on one of the following:
  - Homelessness or at risk of losing permanent housing; or,
  - Residing in housing which poses an **immediate and significant health risk**; or,
  - Rent stressed (paying more than 60% of income toward rent ) with the opportunity to access subsidized or below market rate housing; or,
  - At risk because of domestic violence or care giver abuse
3. Must have limited income and resources:
  - For a single person- income less than 300% of SSI limit and assets less than \$2000 excluding the value of one vehicle, the home when used as a principal residence, and a prepaid funeral plan
  - For married couples- a spouse's income and resources will be considered in making an initial eligibility determination as compared to Medicaid waived service eligibility rules
4. Having a financial need for assistance in paying for housing is not based solely on the basis of meeting the income or resource qualifications above, but by comparing the client's and spouse's income with regularly recurring expenses such as rent, utilities, health insurance premiums, out of pocket medical expenses including past medical

bills, and food. A “reasonableness” standard will be applied by ADVS Program Staff in assessing financial need that may result in assistance being approved at less than the requested amount or by making assistance contingent on the applicant paying a portion of the cost of the requested assistance. Generally, an applicant will not be expected to contribute if discretionary income is less than \$200 a month.

5. **Have a plan for housing stability after assistance is provided**, or be in the process of developing a plan (client must be working with a housing specialist or a community provider if they are working on a plan).
6. Intend to remain a resident of Multnomah County (**ADVSD clients fleeing domestic violence do not have to meet the continuing residency requirement. Assistance in these cases can be used to move clients out of the county on a case by case basis**)
7. Be living in independent housing or a community based care setting; and,
8. Have not received assistance in the previous five years except as stipulated below.

**ELIGIBLE EXPENSES INCLUDE:** rent, security deposits (including last-month’s rent), moving assistance, extreme cleaning necessary to pass a housing inspection, preparation for bed bug treatment (other related expense which enable the applicant to obtain or maintain permanent housing will be considered if funding is available).

**Assistance can only be provided once every five years unless the basis of need involves one of the following (approval determined on a case-by-case basis):**

- **Documented abuse or financial exploitation**
- **Documented medical need**
- **Verified loss of housing due to a change in ownership or redevelopment**
- **Risk of eviction due to bed bug infestation**

**USE:**

Some types of assistance have specific limits (see below). The actual amount of assistance authorized will be based on the client’s income and resources and the circumstances of need.

**Assistance for moving, extreme cleaning, and bed bug prep requests** is provided through contract providers. Instructions on how to access contract providers will be provided when the application for assistance is approved. In most cases, program staff will assign the work to a contractor and the client and/or the case manager or referral source will be involved with scheduling.

**All assistance is provided as a third party payment on behalf of the applicant. Assistance cannot be provided directly to the applicant or the applicant’s family, or be used to reimburse the applicant or the applicant’s family for expenses otherwise covered by the fund.** The cost of minor home repair and adaptation will be evaluated by competitive bid or other information relevant to the work being requested.

## HOUSING PLAN

The housing plan is intended to lead to long term housing stability by specifically addressing the reason(s) assistance is being requested and all factors relevant to the applicant's ability to maintain the housing. In assessing stability of the plan, the client must document sufficient income to pay the rent and the cost of necessary utilities on an on-going basis (after the period of assistance). In the absence of conclusive evidence to the contrary, it will be assumed that for a plan to be considered stable, an applicant's monthly income must exceed the rent by **at least \$150** unless the cost of housing is inclusive of all utilities necessary to maintain tenancy. Available income can include any recurring benefit or wage not intended for a purpose other than housing.

It is the applicant's responsibility to develop their housing plan, although they may require assistance to do so. Applicants who do not have the capacity to develop a housing plan on their own should be referred within the system that serves them (e.g. for clients of ADVSD, a referral to the Multi-Disciplinary Team) or to the provider within the system they are served by to address their housing needs (e.g. if a client is served through the Mental Health system, a mental health provider would likely need to assist with the plan and necessary supports surrounding stability).

## FUND USE PROCEDURE:

### Application Process

1. A person age 60 or older, or a younger person with a long term disability, requests assistance from the ADVSD service system. The request may be made through an ADVSD Long Term Care office, District Senior Center, ADRC/Helpline, Adult Protective Services Program, or another county division or department or with the assistance of a community partner.
2. The case manager or designated staff person receiving the request works with the client to complete a Housing Assistance Customer Intake form that identifies the type of assistance needed and provides all information necessary to process the request including:
  - The address of the housing where assistance will be provided. If a client is moving, the application should include the **both the address of the current residence and where the client wishes to move**.
  - **The names and birthdates of all persons in the household who will benefit from the assistance**. If any of these persons are also clients of the ADVSD network, please include their Social Security and Medicaid case numbers.
  - The type of assistance being requested.
  - The amount of assistance being requested unless assistance is confined to contract services.
  - A description of why the assistance is being requested.
  - A housing plan that leads to long term housing stability.
  - Sufficient vendor information to process payment for **non-contract** related assistance, **including a fax number**.

**In addition, requests based on medical need must include medical documentation of impairment.**

3. **Save the application as a word document and email to: [advsd.safetynet@multco.us](mailto:advsd.safetynet@multco.us).** The Housing Assistance Request/Release and the **must be signed and dated by the applicant and by the worker submitting the application on the applicant's behalf.** This page should be scanned and emailed as a .pdf document.

Faxed applications will only be accepted if there is an immediate need for assistance and the county's e-mail system is down. **Supporting documentation should also be scanned and e-mailed if possible.** If faxing is necessary, send to 503-988-6199.

4. **All requests should be narrated in Oregon Access (for ADVSD referral sources).** Narrations should include the date the client first inquired about assistance as well as when a completed application was actually emailed. A follow-up narration of the outcome should also be narrated.
5. Once a decision has been made, ADVSD Program Staff will notify the referral source to explain the basis of the decision using the criteria in this policy.
6. If the applicant wants to contest a decision, the referral source should notify ADVSD Program Staff by phone or e-mail. Instructions will then be provided about which program staff person the client should contact for follow up. Once this has been done all future client inquiries about the requested assistance should be directed to the identified program staff person.

### **Payment Process**

1. Contract Payments will be processed by ADVSD Community Services, but may require the assistance of the field office to confirm service dates or to verify that services were actually provided.
2. Non-contract payments will require either an invoice or a completed ADVSD Housing Payment form and W9. In most cases, ADVSD Program Staff will handle this, but may request assistance from the referral source if the vendor does not provide required payment documents in a timely manner. **Note: assistance not paid within 90 days of approval will be withdrawn.**

### **Special Circumstances**

1. Assistance involving subsidized housing will be restricted to the non-subsidy amount (the client's portion of the rent). Assistance associated with the use of a Section Eight voucher is contingent on the prospective housing being approved by Home Forward. Deposits in requests involving a subsidy will typically be limited to the amount of one month of unsubsidized rent, but will not include a full month's unsubsidized last month's rent.
2. If funds are requested as a result of overdrawn accounts, lost or stolen money, a copy of bank statements, a police report, or other form of verification should be provided by the

applicant. Assistance provided for this reason can only be provided once for each client. The applicant's plan for stability needs to include a strategy for safekeeping money (e.g. direct deposit, automatic payment to landlord, representative payee).

4. "No Cause" evictions are used by landlords who do not want to pursue a remediation process that would allow a client to maintain tenancy. They can be used when a property is sold or redeveloped and all the tenants displaced, when a tenant's behavior is considered unacceptable, or for a host of other non-payment related reasons. They are rarely if ever issued for "no cause" at all, so applicants requesting housing assistance in these circumstances should be asked why they think the landlord has taken this action. It may be possible to then ascertain what actually occurred, which is usually necessary to evaluate the stability of the housing plan. Not surprisingly, landlords are typically very reticent to discuss the circumstances of a No Cause eviction; however, they still may provide useful information about the applicant's situation, especially if inquiries are general in nature. Field staff may contact ADVSD Program Staff for assistance with these types of requests.
4. Referral sources may be asked to report on housing outcomes 6 months after assistance is provided if that information cannot be obtained through existing ADVSD information systems.