# Emergency Shelter Program Standards

## Ohio Balance of State Continuum of Care

***Adopted: April 2026***

OHIO

Balance of State
Continuum of Care

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# Ohio BoSCoC Program Standards

## Background and Introduction

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), via its Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Rules and Regulations and the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Continuum of Care (CoC) Program Interim Rule, requires that Continua of Care (CoCs) establish and consistently follow written standards for providing assistance. The Ohio BoSCoC has developed these Ohio BoSCoC Homeless Program Standards to fulfill these requirements and to help move the Ohio BoSCoC forward in achieving its Strategic Plan Vision of ending homelessness in the Ohio BoSCoC.

In addition to meeting federal requirements, these standards help the Ohio BoSCoC ensure more consistent use of best practices and help to standardize program design and implementation across our homeless response system.

The Ohio BoSCoC Homeless Program Standards outlined here apply to all homeless assistance projects in the CoC, regardless of funding source. This includes homeless projects funded through HUD's CoC Program, HUD's ESG Program, Ohio's Supportive Housing Program (SHP) and Homeless Crisis Response Program (HCRP), as well as projects that are privately or locally funded.

## Universal Program Standards

### Program Administration

*STANDARD UA.1:* Homeless assistance projects (hereafter called 'Projects') develop comprehensive, written operating procedures (SOPs) to guide all aspects of project implementation and administration.
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. SOPs are reviewed at least annually and updated as needed.
2. The Ohio BoSCoC Program Standards may be used as the foundation of project-level SOPs, but the standards should not serve as the full SOPs on their own.
3. SOPs comply with all funding source requirements and rules including the following (list not exhaustive):
    a. CoC Program Rule
    b. ODOD Program Standards
    c. ESG Rule
    d. PATH Program Guidance
    e. SOS 4.0 Program Guidance
4. SOPs include requirements and expectations for how staff treat clients, emphasizing treating clients with dignity and respect and in a trauma-informed way.
5. Project staff are trained on SOPs during orientation and SOPs are reviewed on at least an annual basis.

*STANDARD UA.2:* Projects are operated in compliance with applicable funding source requirements and rules including the following (list not exhaustive):

1. CoC Program Rule
2. ODOD Program Standards
3. ESG Rule
4. PATH Program guidance
5. SOS 4.0 program guidance

*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. Common administrative funding source requirements include (list not exhaustive):
    a) Submit performance reports on a regular basis.
        i) CoC Program generally requires submission of annual performance report.
        ii) ODOD generally requires submission of semi-annual performance reports.
    b) Secure eligible match funding at the required level.
        i) CoC Program match requirement is generally 25%.
        ii) ODOD Homeless Crisis Response Program (HCRP) match requirement is generally 50%.
    c) Regularly draw down grant funds for incurred costs.
        i) CoC Program generally requires at least quarterly drawdown.
        ii) At grant term, projects should have expended 100% of their grant amount.
    d) Retain records for appropriate terms.

*STANDARD UA.3:* CoC Program funded projects complete the appropriate Environmental Review process and/or form, keeping completed forms on file as required.

*STANDARD UA.4:* Projects have emergency, disaster, and infectious disease preparedness and response procedures, and staff are trained on these procedures on at least an annual basis, for the following situations at minimum:

1. Infectious disease
2. Fire
3. Natural Disasters including flooding, tornado, blizzard
4. Emergencies including active shooters, catastrophic medical events, active violence

*STANDARD UA.5:* CoC Program funded projects that wish to make an amendment to their CoC grant first seek CoC approval and then submit the approved amendment request to HUD.

*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. CoC grantees seeking a grant amendment submit a request for an amendment to the CoC via email. Written amendment request should include the following:
    a) Name of organization and project seeking amendment
    b) The exact amendment being requested
    c) Why the amendment is needed

d) Confirmation that impacted partners support the requested grant amendment, if appropriate
e) Detailed current and proposed amended budget if budget amendment is requested

2. Upon approval by the CoC, CoC grantee will be directed to submit their formal amendment request to HUD.

*STANDARD UA.6:* Projects document client eligibility in a manner that complies with funding source requirements and these program standards.

1. See detailed Program Standards for each project for more information.

*STANDARD UA.7:* In general, projects are not permitted to serve unaccompanied youth under age 18.

*STANDARD UA.8:* Projects maintain appropriate documentation in client files in a manner that complies with funding source requirements and these program standards.

1. See detailed Program Standards for each project for more information.

**Ohio BoSCoC Participation Requirements**

*STANDARD UB.1:* Projects participate in the Ohio BoSCoC Homeless Management Information System or in a comparable database, as dictated by funding sources, and comply with all relevant HMIS policies.

*STANDARD UB.2:* Projects keep client information secure and confidential. Client information is only shared with other service providers with client verbal or written consent or for purposes of service coordination or prioritization for housing.
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. When clients consent to having data collected and entered into HMIS, that provides sufficient consent for providers to discuss relevant client information in PH Prioritization meetings for CE purposes and/or to engage in service coordination on the client's behalf with other relevant providers.
2. Paper copies of client information are stored in locked cabinets, behind locked office doors, and are only accessible to project staff.

*STANDARD UB.3:* Projects participate in and comply with Ohio BoSCoC Coordinated Entry (CE) requirements.
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. See the Ohio BoSCoC CE Operational Manual and other CE documents for detailed information.
2. See detailed Program Standards for each project for more information.

*STANDARD UB.4:* Projects participate in the Ohio BoSCoC annual Point-in-Time (PIT) Count and Housing Inventory Count (HIC), per the CoC's PIT Count methodology and requirements.

1. See detailed PIT and HIC guidance on the CoC's webpage here - https://cohhio.org/boscoc/hicpit/

*STANDARD UB.5:* Projects regularly monitor their performance and make improvements as needed.
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. Projects review the Ohio BoSCoC Performance Management Plan (PMP) and understand the performance goals they should be striving to attain.
2. Projects regularly review their performance against the PMP goals, using Rme and Rm.
3. Where projects are not meeting performance goals, projects develop and implement improvement plans.

*STANDARD UB.6:* Projects comply with CoC Program monitoring requests and fully participate in the monitoring process.

*STANDARD UB.7:* CoC Program funded projects may not operate drug injection sites or "safe consumption sites," knowingly distribute drug paraphernalia on or off property under their control, knowingly permit the use or distribution of illicit drugs on property under their control, or conduct any of these activities under the pretext of "harm reduction."
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. If the CoC determines that a CoC-funded housing project is in violation of this policy, the CoC may require corrective action, technical assistance, modification of project policies or practices, staff training, or other remedies permitted under CoC policy or HUD requirements.
2. The CoC encourages CoC-funded housing projects and community partners to provide or connect participants to substance use disorder treatment, recovery supports, recovery housing, and other clinically appropriate services within or outside the CoC geographic area.
3. This policy does not restrict or prohibit CoC-funded housing projects from requiring sobriety or participation in treatment as a condition of assistance when such requirements are permitted by 24 CFR 578.75(h), other applicable CoC Program requirements, civil rights laws, participant rights protections, and written project policies. This policy also does not require sobriety as a condition of assistance, mandatory treatment participation except where permitted by 24 CFR 578.75(h), or automatic termination for drug-related program or lease violations.
4. This policy also does not prevent the storage and use of opioid overdose reversal medications, such as NARCAN. This policy does not prevent clients from accessing Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT).

**Non-Discrimination and the Equal Access Rule**

*STANDARD UC.1:* Projects do not discriminate in the provision of services or assistance based on race, sex, gender, gender identity, age, disability, or religion.

*STANDARD UC.2:* Projects serve households as they present and comply with the Equal Access Rule.
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. Projects serve households who present together for services as a family, regardless of marital status, actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, with or without children, and irrespective of age, relationship, or whether or not a member of the household has a disability (except where the disability is an eligibility requirement).
2. A child who is temporarily away from the home because of placement in foster care is considered a member of the family.
3. Projects serving families are required to serve the intact family, where desired by the client. Family members, regardless of age, gender, or other factors, cannot be separated from other family members during their program stay.
4. Projects make their resources available to individuals and families without regard to actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

*STANDARD UC.3:* Projects serving households with minor children ensure that those children are able to exercise their educational rights.
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. Students experiencing homelessness have the right to:
   a) Receive a free, appropriate public education.
   b) Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.
   c) Enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents.
   d) Enroll in the local attendance at an area school or continue attending their school of origin (the school they attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled).
   e) Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested
   f) Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to the student's need.
2. To ensure households with children are able to exercise their educational rights, projects designate a staff position to work with households around these educational rights and to ensure enrollment in school and access to required services

**Working with People with Lived Experience**

*STANDARD UD.1:* Projects collect feedback from people with lived experience, including former clients, and incorporate that feedback into program design.
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. At least annually, projects solicit feedback from current/former clients via a voluntary survey.
2. CoC Program funded projects invite people with lived experience to sit on their agency's board of directors or an equivalent policy-making body, in compliance with CoC Program requirements.

*STANDARD UD.2:* Projects support employment pathways into their organizations for people with lived experience of homelessness.
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. Projects establish organizational policies and procedures to support the hiring of people with lived experience, including former clients.
2. Projects hiring former clients comply with HMIS Policies and Procedures regarding providing HMIS licenses to former clients of homeless service providers no sooner than 12 months after receipt of assistance.

**Program Staff and Staffing**

*STANDARD UE.1:* Projects provide sufficient training to staff and volunteers, if applicable, to ensure they are qualified to fulfill their job responsibilities, in compliance with these program standards.
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. Projects train staff on their job responsibilities and how to complete their duties in compliance with these program standards.
2. Projects train staff on organizational and project-level SOPs.
    a) Projects review SOPs with staff annually.
3. Staff training on more general topics and best practices must include, at minimum:
    a) Trauma-Informed Care, Motivational Interviewing, housing focused practices
    b) Client privacy and confidentiality
    c) Conflict Resolution and De-escalation strategies
    d) Training on the Ohio BoSCoC and its policies, requirements, and key processes
4. Staff who will be using HMIS complete required HMIS training.
5. Staff complete appropriate coordinated entry trainings, per the Ohio BoSCoC Coordinated Entry Operational Manual.
6. Project staff complete any training as required by the CoC.

**Program Design and Services**

*STANDARD UF.1:* Projects utilize a housing focused model in aspects of service delivery.
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. All services are primarily focused on obtaining or maintaining housing.

*STANDARD UF.2:* Projects support all clients to develop and act on a Housing Plan that is focused on obtaining and/or maintain housing and meeting basic needs
REQUIREMENTS:

1. All clients are supported to develop and act on a Housing Plan.
2. Clients supported to access needed mainstream resources.
3. Projects complete recurring or annual service needs assessments or recertifications as required by funding source.

*STANDARD UF.3:* Projects connect special populations to specialized services where those services are available.
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. Projects offer to refer people/households who disclose that they are a victim of current or recent domestic violence or sexual assault to specialized services, where available.
2. Projects offer to refer unaccompanied or parenting youth (age 18-24, not accompanied by an older household member) to local youth-serving providers, where available.
3. Projects offer to refer veterans to local veteran-serving providers, such as the VA or Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) providers, where available.

*STANDARD UF.4:* Projects will strive to cooperate with, and not interfere with, local law enforcement efforts that seek to advance public safety.
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. If/when coordinating with local law enforcement to help clear tents and encampments, projects will ensure clearing efforts are done in ways that are trauma-informed, planful, safe, and that result in entrance to shelter and/or housing for those impacted by the clearing.
2. Projects may coordinate with local efforts to lawfully decrease public use of illicit drugs, including by working with people experiencing unsheltered homelessness with substance use disorders to support them to access services from local substance use providers.
3. Projects may work with law enforcement and first responders to lawfully and humanely address safety needs where unhoused folks may pose a threat to themselves and/or others.
4. Projects may lawfully share information in accordance with the Sex Offender Registry and Notification Act (SORNA).

## Emergency Shelter Program Standards

### Definition of Emergency Shelter

Emergency Shelter (ES) projects provide temporary shelter to households who are experiencing homelessness and have no other housing options or resources to obtain housing, and help those households exit homelessness and move back into housing as quickly as possible.

### The Role of Emergency Shelter within the Homeless Response System

Emergency shelters (ES) play a critical role in homeless response systems in that they offer quick access to safe, temporary accommodations for those with no other options. In addition, shelters can help households address basic needs and access essential services, while also helping connect households to available re-housing resources as quickly as possible. ES projects are most successful in their re-housing efforts when they are connected to and participate in local Coordinated Entry (CE) processes including the local PH Prioritization Workgroup.

It is important to remember that ES projects are not the sole solution to homelessness. But they are a critical part of the solution when they operate as part of a multi-faceted system that also includes outreach programs and Permanent Housing resources.

### Applicability of Emergency Shelter Program Standards

The ES Program Standards outlined here apply to all ES projects operating within the Ohio BoSCoC. ES projects that are funded through HUD's Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program and/or the state of Ohio's Homeless Crisis Response Program (HCRP) may be monitored for compliance with these standards.

### Purpose of Emergency Shelter Project Standards

The following sections outline detailed program standards and requirements for ES projects operating within the Ohio BoSCoC. These standards are intended to be used in conjunction with the Universal Program Standards to guide overall project implementation. These program standards help homeless assistance projects in the Ohio BoSCoC meet federal requirements, use best practices, and consistently implement homeless assistance across the CoC.

### Resources to Support ES Program Standards Compliance

a. ODOD HCRP Standards and forms
b. ESG Rule

### A. Program Administration

*STANDARD A.1:* ES projects are adequately staffed by qualified personnel to ensure quality service delivery, program management, and safety of the ES project building.
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. ES projects have sufficient staff capacity to ensure compliance with funder requirements, these written program standards, and other relevant Ohio BoSCoC requirements
2. ES projects have sufficient staff capacity to ensure safety of shelter participants
3. ES projects have sufficient staff capacity to ensure basic case management services can be provided to all program participants

*STANDARD A.2:* ES projects enter client-level data into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. ES project staff with HMIS access are trained on data standards and entry protocols.
2. Client-level data is entered into HMIS within five business days of the interaction or the outcome achieved.
3. ES projects adhere to HMIS requirements, policies and data quality standards.

*STANDARD A.3:* ES projects strive to meet Ohio BoSCoC performance goals, as outlined in the Ohio BoSCoC Performance Management Plan. Key performance measures include:
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. Average/median length of time in shelter
2. Exits to permanent housing
3. Receipt of non-cash benefits at program exit

*STANDARD A.4:* ES projects maintain client file documentation in accordance with funder *REQUIREMENTS* and the 'Universal Standards' section of this document.
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. ES projects, specifically, retain the following documents in client files:
    a. Documentation of homelessness
    b. Housing Plan
    c. Services notes from ES Case Management staff describing progress on the Housing Plan and outcomes of case management

## B. Emergency Shelter Safety and Operations

*STANDARD B.1:* ES projects operate facilities that are safe and sanitary
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. ES project facilities must meet the following minimum standards:
    a. **Structure and materials.** The ES building must be structurally sound to protect residents from the elements and not pose any threat to health and safety of the residents.
    b. **Access.** The ES must be accessible in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794) and implementing regulations at 24 CFR part 8; the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.) and implementing regulations at 24 CFR part 100; and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 12131 et seq.) and 28 CFR part 35; where applicable.
    c. **Space and security.** The ES must provide each participant in the shelter with an acceptable place to sleep and adequate space and security for themselves and their belongings.
    d. **Interior air quality.** Each room or space within the ES must have a natural or mechanical means of ventilation. The interior air must be free of pollutants at a level that might threaten or harm the health of residents.
    e. **Water supply.** The ES's water supply must be free of contamination.
    f. Sanitary facilities. Each participant in the shelter must have access to sanitary facilities that are in proper operating condition, are private, and are adequate for personal cleanliness and the disposal of human waste.
    g. **Thermal environment.** The ES must have any necessary heating/cooling facilities in proper operating condition.
    h. **Illumination and electricity.** The ES must have adequate natural or artificial illumination to permit normal indoor activities and support health and safety. There must be sufficient electrical sources to permit the safe use of electrical appliances in the shelter.

i. **Food preparation.** Food preparation areas, if any, must contain suitable space and equipment to store, prepare, and serve food in a safe and sanitary manner.
j. **Sanitary conditions.** The ES must be maintained in a sanitary condition.
k. **Fire safety.** There must be at least one working smoke detector in each occupied unit of the ES. Where possible, smoke detectors must be located near sleeping areas. The fire alarm system must be designed for hearing-impaired residents. All public areas of the ES must have at least one working smoke detector. There must also be a second means of exiting the building in the event of fire or other emergency.

2. ES projects are prepared to respond to emergency medical situations including:
    a. First aid supplies are on site and accessible at all times
    b. Overdose reversal medications are on site and accessible at all times
    c. ES project staff and volunteers, if appropriate, have been trained in basic first aid, CPR, and administration of overdose medications

*STANDARD B.2:* ES projects complete a Habitability inspection on their ES building(s) at least annually and remediate any identified issues.
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. Inspection reports are retained per record-keeping *REQUIREMENTS*
2. Inspection must be completed by a third-party
    a. Any organization who has staff who conduct Habitability inspections for any purpose may conduct the inspection for an ES building
        i. HUD guidance on Habitability Inspections

*STANDARD B.3*: ES projects immediately address any building(s) issues that cause the building not to pass a Habitability inspection or fail to meet the minimum standards identified above.
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. ES projects have 30 days to address non-safety related or non-serious issues
2. ES projects have 14 days to address safety related or serious issues and Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) and local officials must be notified
    a. Safety related issues include:
        i. Lack of or insufficient fire alarms, smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors
        ii. Blocked fire doors
        iii. Lack of or insufficient fire extinguishers
    a. Serious issues include the following, at minimum
        i. Inoperable or insufficient HVAC
        ii. Lack of hot water
        iii. Lack of functioning basic utilities – gas, electricity, water
3. If more than 30 days are needed to fix issues and/or if residents must be moved out of the ES building to fix the issues, ES projects must notify ODOD, relevant local officials, and CoC staff

a. Communication includes an action plan for how the ES project will address and resolve the issues including the timeframe for actions and timeframe for resolution

*STANDARD B.4:* ES projects are compliant with local building codes and regulations.
*REQUIRMENTS:*

1. Inspection reports must be retained per record-keeping

*STANDARD B.5:* ES projects complete a visual lead-based paint inspection annually and remediate any identified issues.
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. Inspection reports are retained per record-keeping

*STANDARD B.6:* ES projects provide private spaces for households for engaging in personal care.

*STANDARD B.7:* ES projects provide participants with prepared meals and/or with sufficient and sanitary food preparation and storage space.

*STANDARD B.8:* ES projects follow Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Food Safety Program guidance to ensure general food safety.
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. ODH Guidance is available here - https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/food-safety-program/welcome
2. As available and appropriate, ES projects have relevant staff trained on food safety and handling via ServSafe, ODH, or another similar certification or training program

*STANDARD B.9*: ES projects establish program requirements or rules focused on ensuring the safety and dignity of households served.
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. Program requirements /rules are simple, easily understood, and reasonably easy to comply with
2. Program requirements /rules are posted in public spaces within the ES building and communicated to all households at entry

*STANDARD B.10*: ES projects prohibit weapons on building(s) property.

*STANDARD B.11*: ES projects provide safe storage for participant medications.
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. Ideally, medications are stored in locked cabinets, either those dedicated to shelter residents or those maintained by ES provider
2. Participants have ready access to medications as needed and prescribed
3. If medications are stored by the ES provider, ES projects ensure the process to access medications is simple and is clearly communicated to households

*STANDARD B.12*: ES projects prohibit illegal substances, including marijuana and its derivatives, and alcohol in building(s) property
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. If alcohol or substances are discovered, ES projects dispose of items as appropriate
2. Participants are not necessarily exited from the ES project for bringing prohibited substances into the facilities but, where able, are instead supported to access any needed and desired substance abuse disorder services and/or are supported to develop a service plan that will help them identify strategies to avoid bringing prohibited items to the shelter again
3. Selling or distributing illegal substances at an ES facility may be cause for immediate termination from ES

***GOLD STANDARD:*** ES projects allow residents to bring pets into shelter with them, within reasonable limits.
*REQUIREMENTS*

a. ES projects have procedures outlining how pets are accommodated, ensuring safety of pets and other shelter residents and staff
b. ES projects establish agreements and payment arrangements with local veterinary services to ensure access to vet care as needed
c. Resources can be found at the following links:
    i. https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/NAEH-Pet-Friendly-Shelter-Lessons.pdf
    ii. https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Keeping-People-and-Pets-Together-031220.pdf
    iii. https://www.mydogismyhome.org/

## C. Eligibility

### ES Eligibility

*STANDARD C.1*: ES projects serve households who are literally homeless, fleeing or attempting to flee violence, or who are imminently at risk of homelessness and may lack the income and/or supports to end homelessness on their own
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. Literally homeless households
    a. Literal homelessness is defined as homeless households who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
        i. Sleeping in a place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation, such a place not meant for human habitation
        ii. Living in emergency shelter or transitional housing designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including hotel/motel stays paid for by charitable or government programs)
        iii. Exiting an institution where the individual resided for less than 90 days and where the individual entered the institution immediately

from emergency shelter (including hotel/motel stays paid for by charitable or government programs) or an unsheltered location

2. Imminently at risk of homelessness
    a. Defined as households who will lose their primary nighttime residence within 14 days, have no subsequent residence identified, and lack resources or support networks to avoid homelessness on their own
    b. Lack of sufficient income and/or supports
3. Fleeing/Attempting to flee violence
    a. Defined as households who are experiencing trauma or a lack of safety related to, or fleeing or attempting to flee, DV, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous, traumatic, or life-threatening conditions related to the violence against the individual or a family member in the individual's or family's current housing situation, including where the health and safety of children are jeopardized

*STANDARD C.2*: ES projects document eligibility for shelter using third-party written verification of current homelessness or household self-report
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. Third party written verification includes a current program enrollment in an HMIS participating ES or TH project or written verification on agency letterhead from another organization providing ES or TH project assistance to the household seeking shelter or from an agency verifying unsheltered homelessness
    a. Written verifications of homelessness on agency letterhead should include the start and end dates of assistance or the start date of when the agency was able to verify unsheltered homelessness
2. Self-report of literal homelessness, fleeing violence, or being at risk of homelessness is acceptable documentation of homelessness for ES projects
3. For those imminently at risk of homelessness, ES projects may also use household self-report to document that the household lacks sufficient income or supports to prevent their own homelessness

*STANDARD C.3*: Within limits, ES projects may impose additional eligibility
*REQUIREMENTS:* over and beyond basic eligibility outlined above. Examples of allowable additional eligibility are outlined here as well as examples of additional eligibility that are not allowed:

1. Allowable additional eligibility requirements:
    a. Must be household with minor children
    b. Must be household without minor children
    c. Must be a household comprised of only youth (age 18-24) with or without minor children
    d. Must be fleeing or attempting to flee violence
    e. Only if a funding source dictates, may limit eligibility to households who previously resided in the same community/county where the ES project is located
        i. If no funding source includes this requirement, ES projects must serve all eligible households regardless of where they last resided

        ii. Household inability to produce documentation that they resided within a particular community/county cannot be used to deny shelter entry
1. Prohibited additional eligibility requirements (list not exhaustive):
    a. Couples must be married
    b. Households must demonstrate current sobriety
    c. Household must have ability to obtain income or have income at program entry
    d. Household must have no current or past criminal history
    e. Household members must not have a disability

*STANDARD C.4*: ES projects may be dedicated to only serving households with children or households without children, dedicated to serving survivors of violence, dedicated to serving Veterans, or dedicated to only serving youth households (ages 18-24)
*REQUIREMENTS*:
1. ES projects that only serve one household type must clearly document this eligibility criteria in their Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and any advertising or marketing material they create

**D. ES Access**

*STANDARD D.1*: ES projects comply with the Equal Access Rule by making their resources available to all eligible households regardless of actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity
*REQUIREMENTS*:
1. ES projects serve individuals according to the gender with which they identify
2. ES projects with shared sleeping areas and/or bathrooms may inquire about sex or gender identity for purposes of determining room assignment or providing safe access to bathroom facilities. However, ES projects should also strive to arrange sleeping arrangements that the individual is most comfortable with

*STANDARD D.2*: ES projects keep households intact when serving them in shelter.
*REQUIREMENTS*:
1. For households with minor children, ES projects serve the intact household, where desired by the client. Family members, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, or other factors, cannot be separated from other family members during their program stay
2. For households without children, ES projects serve the household together, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, or other factors, as long as shelter space can accommodate and where desired by the client
    a. Shelter projects that are configured with only shared sleeping spaces may need to consider options for reconfiguration in order to serve couples or adult families in an intact manner

*STANDARD D.3*: ES projects limit reasons for shelter entry denial to the following:

*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. ES projects serving Households with Minor Children
    a. Denial based on being on a sex offender registry
    b. Denial based on criminal convictions related to arson, violent offenses
2. ES projects serving Households without Minor Children
    a. Denial based on being on the sex offender registry
        a. ES projects that do not serve minor children may only deny shelter entry based on sex offender registry status if the shelter location is such that they are legally prohibited from sheltering those on the sex offender registry
3. Where ES projects deny entry based on sex offender registry and/or certain criminal convictions, ES SOPs must specifically identify these reasons for denial

*STANDARD D.4*: ES projects do not require households to provide formal, personal identification in order to enter shelter.

*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. ES projects do not require households to produce state IDs, drivers' licenses, birth certificates, income statements, or other documents verifying identification in order to enter shelter
2. ES projects may request that prospective adult shelter entrants produce one form of identification, but shelter entry cannot not be denied if identification cannot be produced
    a. If a person cannot provide any form of identification, ES projects may use other informal methods of attempting to verify the identification of the prospective shelter entry
    b. ES projects assist those households without IDs to access a free ID via Ohio BMV

*STANDARD D.5*: ES projects do not deny entry based on past shelter usage or exit type (voluntary vs. involuntary). Refer to the Termination section below for more details about exit types.

*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. Regardless of exit type, involuntary or voluntary, households are permitted to return to shelter at any point after their exit, as long as they are eligible and beds/units are available
2. Households are not limited to a certain number of shelter stays over any period of time
3. Households who were previously exited from shelter for a violation of shelter rules or program agreements are not automatically denied shelter re-entry
    a. Households who were previously exited from shelter because of violence or threats of violence must still be considered for shelter re-entry. However, shelter providers can make the determination about allowing re-entry on a case-by-case basis, based on a review of current risk factors for repeated violence or threats of violence.
4. ES projects do not maintain a permanent 'Do Not Return' list

*STANDARD D.6*: ES projects only enroll new households who have come through the Ohio BoSCoC's Coordinated Entry (CE) system.
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. ES projects enroll eligible households after confirming the household first contacted a CE Access Point (CE AP). Confirmation may occur via communication directly with the CE AP or verification within HMIS via evidence of the household's CE AP enrollment in HMIS
2. If the CE AP was closed when the household was seeking assistance, the ES project may enroll the household. The ES project should then assist the household to contact the CE AP and complete the CE enrollment as soon as the CE AP is open.

## E. Supportive Services

Ohio BoSCoC ES projects offer all residents voluntary services that are grounded in housing focused practices. In general, services prioritize helping households in ES create and make progress on a Housing Plan and move out of homelessness and into housing as quickly as possible.

*STANDARD E.1*: ES projects remain open during daytime hours and/or provide access to facilities for purposes of supporting residents to access needed services.
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. ES projects do not force residents to leave the shelter
2. During these daytime hours, ES projects make available case managers and other supportive services staff to support households in developing and making progress on Housing Plans

*STANDARD E.2*: ES projects provide households information about the project's rules, program agreements, and termination process.
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. ES projects provide information at the beginning of the ES stay and may provide written copies of the information to households
2. ES projects post the information in public spaces within the ES building

STANDARD E.3: Per the Ohio BoSCoC Coordinated Entry Manual, households in ES are assessed with the CoC's common assessment tool either immediately after shelter entry or within 5-8 days of entry.
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. Households who have previously experienced homelessness
    a. ES projects complete the common assessment tool immediately after shelter entry
2. Households experiencing their first episode of homelessness
    a. ES projects complete the common assessment tool within 5-8 days of shelter entry
3. Households needing to exit shelter ASAP for their wellbeing due to health/mental health needs/issues

a. ES projects complete the common assessment tool immediately after shelter entry

**Housing Focused**

*STANDARD E.4*: ES projects continually engage in housing problem-solving conversations with all households during their first week of a shelter stay, in an attempt to help the household find alternative, safe housing.

*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. Conversations are documented in resident's case management file, supportive services plan, Housing Plan, or other similar document

*STANDARD E.5*: ES projects offer voluntary, individualized case management services that are housing focused.

*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. Voluntary Supportive Services
    a. ES projects offer supportive services to households on a voluntary basis
    b. ES projects may require households to meet with case managers on a regular basis for purposes of developing and working on a Housing Plan, including overcoming immediate barriers to securing housing
2. Individualized Services
    a. ES projects work with households to develop Housing Plans that are driven by the household's goals and needs
3. Housing Focused Assistance
    a. ES projects' primary goal is to help households access permanent housing as quickly as possible, regardless of other personal issues or concerns

*STANDARD E.6*: ES projects work with all shelter residents to develop a Housing Stability Plan and/or Individual Service Plan (from hereon called a 'Housing Plan') that includes basic goals and action steps for accessing housing and addressing other needs.

*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. ES projects develop Housing Plans with ALL households within 7 days of shelter entry
2. Housing plans are client-driven and individualized based on the household's particular needs, goals, and desires
3. ES staff support households to work on Housing Plan goals
4. ES projects may require residents to meet with ES staff at least weekly to collaboratively work on Housing Plan goals
    a. More frequent meetings may occur as needed or requested by households
    b. Meeting location (via phone, email, or in-person) is determined by household needs

*STANDARD E.7*: For households who may have higher barriers to accessing housing, ES projects work with them to develop a Housing Plan as quickly after shelter entry as

possible and offer more intensive case management assistance to help make progress on the Housing Plan.
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. Higher barriers may include having multiple past episodes of homelessness, having a serious mental illness or substance use disorder, having a criminal history, having an eviction history, or having a large household size

*STANDARD E.8*: At minimum, Housing Plans must address the following goals and related action steps:
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. Housing goal
    a. Type of housing sought
    b. Action steps to obtain and sustain housing
2. Getting document ready for possible RRH or PSH assistance, including
    a. Assistance to obtain an ID
        i. Free ID via Ohio BMV
    b. Assistance to obtain birth certificates for children, if relevant
    c. Assistance to obtain social security cards, if relevant
    d. Assistance to formally document a disability diagnosis, if relevant
    e. Assistance to document income
3. Addressing basic needs, including
    a. Food
    b. Medical care
    c. Clothing and hygiene items
4. Accessing non-cash benefits
5. Gaining and/or increasing cash income, as needed and appropriate
6. Accessing transportation supports, as needed and appropriate
    a. Transportation assistance may include providing vouchers for public transit options or ride sharing services, supporting households to access mainstream transportation resources, or transporting households in agency/staff vehicles

*STANDARD E.9*: ES projects serving households with children ensure those children are enrolled in school and that the household can access any necessary supports. See the 'Universal Standards' section of this document for more details.
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. ES projects have dedicated staff who are responsible for ensuring children are enrolled in school and that needed supports are accessed
2. These dedicated staff may advocate to relevant schools to ensure transportation and other services are provided, as required by the McKinney-Vento Act

*STANDARD E.10*: ES projects participate in their local Permanent Housing (PH) Prioritization Workgroup, as required by the Ohio BoSCoC Coordinated Entry Operational Manual.
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. ES project staff participate in these meetings to help ensure their residents are appropriately prioritized for available, local PH resources

2. ES projects collaborate with local PH providers to provide documentation of homelessness and homeless history for purposes of helping document client eligibility for PH resources they have been prioritized for.

### F. Working with Special Populations

The following section outlines requirements and recommendations for ES project operations that may support work with special populations or households with more challenging or higher barriers.

*STANDARD F.1*: ES projects connect special populations to specialized services where those services are available.
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. ES projects offer to refer people/households who disclose that they are a victim of current or recent domestic violence to local DV ES projects, where available
2. ES projects offer to refer unaccompanied or parenting youth (age 18-24, not accompanied by an older household member) to local youth-serving providers, where available
3. If the only available specialized services are for permanent housing, ES projects should follow the prioritization process as outlined in the Ohio BoSCoC CE Operational Manual

*STANDARD F.2*: ES projects immediately offer a referral to the local Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) provider whenever a Veteran is identified.
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. Due to the availability of SSVF resources, Veterans do not need to be prioritized for SSVF assistance via the Ohio BoSCoC's CE processes
2. ES projects may refer Veterans to SSVF prior to completing the common assessment tool
3. See the Ohio BoSCoC: Coordinated Entry System Plan for Homeless Veterans and the Ohio BoSCoC Coordinated Entry Operational Manual for more details

*STANDARD F.3*: For households who may have higher barriers to accessing housing, ES projects work with them to develop a Housing Plan as quickly after shelter entry as possible and offer more intensive case management assistance to help make progress on the Housing Plan.

1. Higher barriers may include having multiple past episodes of homelessness, having a serious mental illness or substance use disorder, having a criminal history, having an eviction history, or having a large household size

*STANDARD F.4*: ES projects do not exit higher barrier households from ES for needing ES longer or for failing to make satisfactory progress on a Housing Plan.
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. ES projects may not exit higher barrier households for reaching a particular length of stay, particularly if the exit may result in unsheltered homelessness

2. ES projects must remember that the ES length of stay performance goal is a goal for all people served, on average. The goal length of stay is in no way intended to serve as a maximum length of stay as part of program rules.

*STANDARD F.5*: When a household in shelter is observed as no longer being able to manage their self-care, ES projects refer the household to an appropriate organization or service that can better meet their needs.

**G. Termination of Assistance**

*STANDARD G.1*: ES projects provide information about their termination process, including grievance procedures, to households in ES.
*REQUIREMENTS*:

1. ES projects provide information by posting the information in public spaces and providing written copies to households at program entry.
2. The grievance process must include, at minimum, the following elements:
    a. Opportunity for the household to file a grievance in writing or to be supported by ES staff to provide a written grievance (e.g., the household dictates the grievance to staff who draft the written grievance)
    b. Ability for the household filing the grievance to have the grievance heard by someone other than the staff who made the decision that is being grieved or their subordinate
    c. Opportunity for the household to review evidence relied on to make the decision that is being grieved
    d. Provision of a prompt, final, written decision in response to the grievance

*STANDARD G.2*: ES projects support households to voluntarily exit from ES when the following conditions are met:
*REQUIREMENTS:*

1. The household has identified a safe housing option
    a. Including staying with family or friends temporarily or permanently
    b. Including identifying their own housing unit
2. The household has been prioritized for local Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) or Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) resources
    a. In these cases, ES projects work with local PH providers to provide documentation of homelessness and homeless history for eligibility documentation and work with the household, as needed, to supply other needed documentation
    b. Household should be permitted to remain in ES, as needed, until they can move into the RRH or PSH unit they have been prioritized for
3. When clients do not return to shelter after at least one night of stay, ES projects may consider this a voluntary exit from shelter
    a. ES projects should confirm that there were no extenuating circumstances, such as an ER stay or arrest, that prevented the person/household from returning to shelter, before considering the failure to return a voluntary exit

*STANDARD G.3*: ES projects involuntarily terminate households only under the following conditions:

1. Significant violation of program requirements/rules
2. The health or safety of other shelter residents or staff is endangered

*STANDARD G.4*: ES projects do not involuntarily terminate households for the following:

1. Failing to make progress on a Housing Plan
2. Insignificant violations of program requirements/rules
3. Reaching a particular length of stay in ES
4. Terminations for the above reasons should be avoided particularly if the termination will result in an experience of unsheltered homelessness

*STANDARD G.5*: When exiting a household from ES, ES projects provide households with a written copy of the reason for the exit and written details of the grievance process.