

**CIRCULAR**

**Date:** October 9, 2015

**CIRCULAR NUMBER:** EIA #2015-39 REVISED

**Alternate Programs:**

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**To:** Community Social Service Supervisors/Program Managers

**Subject:** Housing First Programs in Winnipeg

**Reference:**

**Replaces:** Replaces #2015-39 issued October 2, 2015

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**Type:**  Policy  For Internal Reference Only  
 Procedure  
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 Information Only

**Effective Date** Immediately

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This updated circular replaces the previous circular called Emergency Housing First in Winnipeg. The programs are now referred to as *Housing First Programs*. In addition, Resource Assistance for Youth is now receiving funding to deliver a Housing First program and is listed below. Plans for transitioning clients out of Housing First programs to another program are still being determined; therefore a paragraph referencing program goals has been removed.

This circular provides policy information for EIA participants involved in the Housing First (HF) programs in Winnipeg which are currently operating until March 31, 2019. There will be approximately 160 intakes to HF programs per year.

Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) funding is provided to six Winnipeg service providers to provide case management and serve as a point of contact for chronically or episodically homeless clients to Housing First programs.

These Housing First (HF) programs have received HPS funding to provide a maximum rent top-up of **up to \$200 per month**, similar to the Portable Housing Benefit and At Home/Chez Soi. This top-up will be exempt for EIA participants while involved in one of the HF programs listed. If EIA participants are in private rent, they are eligible for the full Rent Assist amount and the HF top-up will make up the difference in the rental cost, if any.

HF Service providers and *program names* are as follows:

1. Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre of Winnipeg: *A Place to Call Home*
2. Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs: *Fresh Start – Gaining Momentum*
3. Ma Mawi Chi Itata Centre: *Wi Che Win – i) Come Walk with Me* and *ii) Beaver Medicine Bundle*
4. Mount Carmel Clinic: *ACT II*
5. West Central Women's Resource Centre: *More Than Four Walls*
6. Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY): *Housing First*

HF service providers will fax the attached HF confirmation/change of circumstances form to the EIA community offices when clients are accepted into their respective HF program, and when they are no longer in the program.

In addition, the HF service providers have received funding through HPS for "Independent Living Essentials". Participants receive goods and furniture directly, including linens/bedding, cutlery, pots/pans, dishes, a coffee maker, curtains, toaster, and cleaning supplies. They also have furniture available including a bed, dresser, night stand, couch, kitchen table/chairs, coffee table, and microwave.

If the participant requests and is eligible for special needs funding for beds, bedding or start-up through EIA, the HF program will adjust their provisions according to what is received from EIA. The confirmation/change of circumstances form has a section for special needs funding. Service providers will be involved in this process to ensure that there is clear communication as to what the client is eligible for and what the service provider will provide so that there is no duplication. **EIA staff will need to confirm eligibility or ineligibility for special needs** on the confirmation form (Section B on the form).

HPS funding is also provided to the Doorways project, operating out of the Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre (AHWC). Doorways is a community collaboration that designed a Housing First data instrument (assessment tool) and data management system, as well as providing a coordinated access, intake and assessment system for Housing First programs in Winnipeg. Clients can access services directly through Doorways, or by referrals from emergency shelters or the Housing First organizations listed. A Placement Committee meets once per week to review the assessments, determine the capacity of Housing First programs, and then match the participant with the Housing First program that is best suited to his/her needs.

The North End Community Renewal Corporation also received HPS funding to provide centralized housing procurement for the Housing First programs, under the program name *Housing Plus*. The Housing Plus team will strive to hold units for the exclusive viewing of Housing First clients. As well, the Housing Plus team will work with local contractors to help with major repairs and re-location when required, and to provide guidance regarding tenant-landlord conflict with the goal of preventing eviction.

## **BACKGROUND**

The federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) Housing First approach involves moving individuals who are chronically or episodically homeless from the streets or emergency shelters directly into permanent housing. Permanent housing is complemented by the provision of services to assist clients in sustaining their housing and re-integration into the community.