



A SIMPLE GUIDE TO FINDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN ALAMEDA COUNTY

VOLUME 2



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Disclaimer

The material in this guide is presented for informational purposes and should not be viewed as legal, financial or real estate advice. The writer has no affiliation with any agency that is listed in this guide and makes no representations or warranties with regard to the resources or services they provide.

It was not feasible to include a description of every housing-related program in the County in this guide. The programs that are mentioned were include as examples of the type of housing service they provide. Please accept the author's apologies for any omissions.

The author is not an attorney and is neither qualified nor permitted to give legal advice. Please seek the services of an attorney with all questions, concerns or specific needs related to your rental housing situation.

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Part One

The Programs: Temporary or Shared Housing

Section 1: Transitional Housing

Transitional housing provides temporary affordable housing and support services in order to assist homeless individuals and families in making the transition to permanent housing. Transitional housing is accompanied by on-site case management services and structured group activities such as counseling, job placement services, life skills coaching and twelve-step recovery groups. By definition, transitional housing is time-limited. Time limits may range from 6 months to 24 months. Federally subsidized transitional housing programs cannot exceed the HUD-designated time limit of 24 months.

Residents sign a lease or occupancy agreement, and typically have access to shared common areas such as a living room, family room and kitchen. Depending on the program, bedrooms and bathrooms may be shared with one or more other residents. Rent is often based on 30% of the resident's income; however, a flat rent is generally charged by many transitional housing programs that are not federally subsidized. Many programs require that residents participate in a savings program and/or contribute a portion of their CalFresh (food stamp) benefits to the program as part of the cost of their housing. Participation in meetings, chores, and structured group activities is usually mandatory. Most transitional housing programs have house rules and nightly curfews. While some transitional housing programs follow a "Housing First" model, others require residents to be in recovery.

Transitional housing is often designed to address the needs of specific groups, e.g., homeless veterans, survivors of domestic violence and their children, transition age youth (young adults between the ages of 18-24 who have aged out of foster care), homeless women with children, individuals with severe mental illness, individuals in recovery, or individuals who are formerly incarcerated. Transitional housing is sometimes offered to graduates of residential mental health and/or substance use treatment programs as part of a structured aftercare program. Finally, transitional housing is frequently offered by Christian community-based organizations.

Sober Living Environments, also called SLEs or sober living houses, provide a safe and supportive structured living environment for people who are exiting residential drug or alcohol treatment programs and for those who lack stable housing and social support and feel they are at risk for relapse. A commitment to recovery and willingness to participate in meetings and programs such as A.A. or N.A. is generally required.

BACS (Bay Area Community Services), Housing Consortium of the East Bay, BOSS (Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency), EOCP (East Oakland Recovery Project), FESCO (Family Emergency Shelter Coalition), Operation Dignity, Covenant House, the Alameda Point Collaborative and Building Futures are among the agencies that operate transitional housing programs in Alameda County.

Access to transitional housing is most often by referral from a social worker or case manager. Entry into some transitional housing programs requires a referral by the Alameda County Coordinated Entry System. Contacting 2-1-1 is the most efficient way to obtain information about transitional housing programs and their application process and eligibility criteria.

Section 2: Rapid Rehousing Programs (Time-Limited Rental Subsidies)

Rapid Re-Housing programs provide homeless individuals and/or families with time-limited housing subsidies on permanent housing units. The National Alliance to End Homelessness defines Rapid Re-Housing as “a solution to homelessness designed to help individuals and families to quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. It is offered without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety) and the resources and services provided are typically tailored to the unique needs of the household”. Rapid Re-Housing programs follow the Housing First model.

Rapid Re-Housing programs have three core components: housing identification, assistance with move-in and rental costs, and case management support.

- Staff that work in housing identification find and recruit landlords who are willing to rent to the program’s clients. Housing identification often includes recruiting landlords who are willing to enter into a master lease with the program. Housing identification staff also works with clients to assess their needs and preferences and match them to appropriate housing.
- Rent and move-in assistance is intended to help with the costs associated with getting into housing. It generally covers the cost of the client’s security deposit as well as short-term rental subsidies and assistance with utilities and other move-in expenses. The duration of the subsidy typically ranges from four months to a year.
- Case management services are designed to help clients identify, address and navigate the barriers that can interfere with a successful housing search. The case manager also assists the client in stabilizing after they are housed by connecting them to needed services and supports. Case management services often continue after the subsidy assistance ends.

Referrals to Rapid Re-Housing programs are generally made by agencies such as the County Social Services Agency or Probation Department operating as members of multi-agency coalitions, or by homelessness service providers that are associated with the Alameda County Coordinated Entry System. Recent examples of Rapid Re-Housing programs in Alameda County include:

- Housing placements and rental subsidies that provide a year of rental assistance to individuals exiting the Safer Ground (Project Roomkey) hotels.
- The Realignment Housing Program, which assists re-entry clients from Alameda County Jail and persons who are under probation supervision. Referrals to Realignment Housing are made by the individual’s probation officer. In addition to short-term rental

assistance, services include case management, shelter or transitional housing placements, and assistance securing long term housing.

- CalWORKs Housing Support (HSP), which assists a small number of homeless families that receive CalWORKs benefits.
- Programs for households experiencing homelessness in various parts of the County, with assistance provided by ABODE Services, BACS, FESCO, Building Futures, Berkeley Food and Housing, SAVE or the Tri-Valley Haven. The Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department provides funding for many of these collaborations.

Section 3: Room Rentals and Models of Shared Tenancy

Shared housing can be a workable option for individuals with limited financial resources, or as a short-term housing strategy for a person whose long range goal is to be approved for affordable or subsidized housing. However, it should be noted that many room rentals cost in excess of \$800 a month, putting them out of reach for most low-income PLWH. The cost of shared housing relative to monthly income can also make it difficult to save for an affordable unit of one's own. When seeking shared housing, issues such as compatibility, housekeeping standards and lifestyle choices (including expectations around the use of tobacco, cannabis and alcohol) are especially important.

Shared housing arrangements generally fall into two categories:

- A group of individuals rents a house or apartment from a landlord, each of whom enters into a lease or rental agreement with the landlord for a portion of the rent and utility costs. Each tenant pays move-in costs and monthly rent/utility payments directly to the landlord. When a tenant moves out, the landlord advertises the vacancy and enters into a rental agreement with the new tenant.
- An individual tenant rents a house or apartment and has a lease or rental agreement with a landlord, and then rents rooms to other tenants. In essence, this tenant becomes the other tenants' landlord. This individual is often referred to as the master tenant or primary tenant. Each of the "sub-tenants" enters into a lease or rental agreement with the primary tenant and pays move-in costs and monthly rent/utility payments to the primary tenant, who in turn pays the entire monthly rent to the landlord (the owner of the property or their management agent).

When each tenant rents directly from the landlord, they are responsible only for their portion of the rent and utilities as stated on their individual lease or rental agreement. When each tenant pays rent and utility costs to the primary tenant, the primary tenant is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the landlord receives the entire rent every month and that the utility bills are kept current.

It is important for tenants in shared housing situations to be fully aware of their legal and financial rights and responsibilities in the event that one of the tenants' rent becomes

delinquent or their portion of the utility costs are unpaid. Obtaining legal advice in these situations is vitally important.

Rental assistance under Ryan White EFA and STRMU is available to individuals who live in shared housing. The rental assistance covers only the eligible individual's portion of rent and pro-rated utility charges, and the landlord or primary tenant must provide an IRS Form W-9 as part of the application.

In Berkeley and Hayward there are a few HOPWA properties that are single-family dwellings with anywhere from 5 to 8 bedrooms and shared common areas. Each HOPWA tenant has a rental agreement with the owner/management company. In addition, under some circumstances, a Housing Choice Voucher subsidy can be used in shared housing settings. The housing authority will normally require that the landlord be the owner of the unit and not a primary tenant renting to other tenants.

Part Two

The Programs: Resources for Clients Experiencing Homelessness

Section 4: The Alameda County Coordinated Entry System

For people in Alameda County who are experiencing literal homelessness or who are at imminent risk of homelessness, the Coordinated Entry System, or CES, is the most significant resource available to them. Implemented in late 2017 and re-designed in 2021, it is a "housing crisis response system" whose aim is not to create new housing resources, but rather to ensure that all persons who are experiencing homelessness in the County have equitable access to available and appropriate homelessness services.

The establishment of a Coordinated Entry System is a federal requirement for all cities or counties that receive HUD funding for homelessness services. The Alameda County CES includes public and non-profit agencies and is managed by the Alameda County Office of Homeless Care and Coordination. CES programs and resources include projects that are funded by the HUD Continuum of Care and Emergency Solutions Grant programs, State Homekey programs, County-funded programs, and programs funded by the Mental Health Services Act, HOPWA, and the HUD Community Development Block Grant and Emergency Housing Voucher programs. All agencies participating in CES use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to record client information and to document CES activities and program referrals offered to the client. (Information related to persons impacted by domestic or intimate partner violence is maintained in a separate database).

The Coordinated Entry System is built on three premises:

- There will be one clear entry point and one standardized application process. Clients seeking CES services will have access to resources and support regardless of their circumstances or the point of access where they seek assistance.

- Agencies that provide services to persons experiencing homelessness will be linked together in one system with one waiting list. The system and the programs to which it refers clients will be “low barrier” and will operate according to the core principles of harm reduction and Housing First.
- Services will be offered based on a priority system that ranks clients according to acuity, or severity of need. Staff will communicate with clients in a transparent manner and provide realistic information about the limitations on resources and the likelihood and timing of the assistance they might receive.

A person or family is considered to be literally homeless (or “HUD Homeless”) if they “lack a fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residence,” i.e., if they are staying in an emergency shelter or are living in a place that is unsuitable for habitation, e.g., a vehicle, tent, or sidewalk. A person is also considered to be literally homeless if are (1) currently without housing, (2) have recently exited an institutional setting (hospital, treatment facility, jail, etc.) where they stayed for 90 days or less, and (3) were living in an emergency shelter or place that was unsuitable for habitation prior to entering the institutional setting.

Individuals are considered “chronically” homeless according to HUD regulations if they are living with a disability and if they have experienced one or more episodes of literal homelessness totaling 12 or more months during the past three years.

Accessing CES Services: A person who is experiencing literal homelessness can access CES services in one of the following ways:

- Calling 2-1-1 for pre-screening to establish literal homelessness and for a warm hand-off transfer to one of the County’s Housing Resource Centers. 2-1-1 also provides limited housing problem solving services and provides referrals to resources outside CES.
- Visiting a Housing Resource Center (HRC) during drop-in hours or calling a Housing Resource Center to schedule an assessment appointment. (Please see the Resources section of this guide for a list of HRC’s and how to contact them). There are Housing Resource Centers (HRCs) located in each region of the County, with each HRC offering a full range of CES activities, including triage, ‘housing problem solving’, assessment, and matching to regional housing resources. In addition, there are additional HRCs that offer specialty services and resources that are designed for, and available to, specific populations such as veterans, transition age youth, and people fleeing domestic or gender-based violence. (Members of these subpopulations are not required to use a specific access point; they may also receive services at any HRC).
- Engaging with staff of a street outreach team or one of the County’s Street Health teams. These teams serve limited areas, including designated encampments and outdoor locations, and provide services to eligible clients.

Determining Eligibility for CES Services: Initial encounters between clients and CES staff begin with triage, a screening to determine emergency response needs, and questions related to safety planning. Staff also asks screening questions in order to learn the client's housing status (i.e., to confirm literal homelessness) and to determine if they qualify for CES services. Staff assesses whether the client is expressing or displaying any urgent needs such as a health or mental health emergency and calls crisis services or 911 if necessary. Safety planning questions explore whether the client may be fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence or human trafficking or is a survivor of the same. Those who are identified as survivors are offered DV resources. The responses to these initial questions will be used to determine eligibility for a variety of CES resources and services.

Housing Problem Solving: Triage and safety assessment is followed by a process called Housing Problem Solving (HPS). HPS is offered after a client's homeless status has been established, but before the individual is assessed for CES resources. HPS involves a series of exploratory strengths-based conversations designed to engage the client in identifying available "self-help" options that could resolve their housing crisis without additional support from the housing crisis response system (CES). If one or more potential resolutions is identified, a client assessment is not conducted. If a potential resolution cannot be identified, an assessment is scheduled and conducted. Whether or not a potential resolution has been identified, information about shelter availability is offered if the person has no safe options for the night.

Housing Problem Solving is not intended to take the place of ongoing case management. At least one opportunity to participate in HPS is offered to every individual when they first contact a Housing Resource Center or street outreach worker in order to obtain homelessness (housing crisis) services. HPS is also available on request to any person whose assessment has been completed but who has not yet been assigned to a CES-affiliated program or has not yet received a CES resource.

HPS is considered successful when one or more options for resolving the client's housing crisis have been identified and HPS staff has provided appropriate services and/or resources to support the resolution. Examples of successful problem-solving can include:

- resolving the issues that precipitated the client's move from their previous housing situation, often via conflict resolution,
- moving from a shelter or the streets to a safe place with family or friends,
- returning to (or traveling to) another community where a safe, stable place to live is available,
- entering a treatment program or other temporary placement with the intention of moving from the program placement to permanent housing that is obtained through a non-CES source.

If a possible resolution is identified, staff works with the client to develop a plan to pursue the resolution and offers necessary information and assistance, including referrals to other programs and services, conflict resolution or mediation, and/or housing search assistance to help the client locate appropriate housing on their own. "Flex Funds" are also available on a

limited basis to support the specific problem resolution that has been identified. Flex Funds are not automatically offered to all clients. The assistance is only offered to a client “if it is clear that Flex Funds are needed to secure the resolution under consideration.” Flex Funds are offered on an interim basis and are based on need, the type of resolution being supported, and the client’s ability to cover costs using other resources. Funds are designed to be used “sparingly” and for periods of no greater than 30 days. The funds are intended to cover “only those costs that are necessary to achieve an immediate resolution, and may cover some interim household needs or bridge a financial gap while more permanent resources are secured.”

Assessments: The 2021 system redesign (CES 2.0) established the use of two assessment instruments, with clients being scored for placement on one or both of two queues: a crisis queue and a housing queue. The assessment process is used both to obtain information about immediate and long-term needs and to establish an acuity score based on the answers to certain weighted questions.

Crisis Assessment – The crisis assessment is used to learn whether the individual is interested in placement at an emergency shelter, in transitional housing, or at one of the County’s “safe parking” sites. The assessment is also used to determine the individual’s or household’s relative priority for the above-named crisis resources. Ideally, at the time of the assessment, the individual should be given an estimate of approximately how long they are likely to wait for a referral to crisis resources. The crisis assessment instrument is brief and asks few questions of a personal nature. In order to establish the household’s priority for crisis services, the assessment includes questions about the number of persons in the household, their ages, their income, and the household’s prior living situation. The assessment also includes questions about health conditions (including HIV status) and disabilities or health needs that would increase the household’s priority for crisis resources.

Housing Assessment - The Housing Assessment is designed to ascertain eligibility for time-limited housing subsidies such as Rapid Rehousing (see Part One, Section Two of this guide) and/or permanently subsidized housing. The Housing Assessment is a more in-depth assessment than the Crisis Assessment. Building on the information contained in the participant profile, CES enrollment, and Crisis Assessment (if it was administered), the Housing Assessment contains more personal and sensitive questions. In addition to questions about perceived safety and their responsibility for the care of infants, children or a medically fragile partner, clients are asked about their health status, chronic health conditions including HIV, and co-occurring physical and mental health issues, including problematic substance use. They are also asked about recent ambulance trips and episodes of Emergency Department medical treatment. The assessment also includes questions about housing and homelessness history and barriers to obtaining housing, including past evictions, arrests and periods of incarceration. If an individual has completed a Crisis Assessment, those responses are incorporated into the Housing Assessment.

Acuity scoring (scoring based on severity of need) is used to determine the participant’s relative priority for housing that is currently available or is anticipated to become available.

While scoring methods are not disclosed, the heaviest weight is generally given to health, disability and self-care needs that jeopardize a person's survival in settings not suitable for habitation.

Because vulnerabilities due to health status play such a large role in establishing severity of need, medical case managers should emphasize to clients that it is vitally important for PLWH to disclose their health status, including co-morbidities and co-occurring disorders, during the assessment interview. In addition, because CES makes referrals to HOPWA-funded permanent supportive housing, a decision not to disclose HIV health status will prevent the client from being referred to housing for which they could potentially qualify. (Omission of information about HIV status can be corrected through a request for an updated assessment).

Assessment Scores and Placement in Queues:

Both the Crisis Assessment and Housing Assessment result in the assignment of an acuity score, and those with the highest scores are assisted first. Assessment scores are used to place clients on "queues," i.e., lists of eligible and prioritized individuals/households that are used for matching and referral to a specific set of resources. (Acuity scoring is dynamic, i.e., a person could drop to a lower spot on a queue for crisis services or housing assistance when someone with more severe needs is assessed and added to the waitlist).

The Crisis Queue contains the names of those who have participated in a Crisis Assessment and are interested in the crisis resources described above, while the Housing Queue contains "key information" about households that is used to establish priority order and match those clients to available or anticipated housing resources. Both queues employ the use of "threshold scores", an assessment score that "qualifies a household to be added to the corresponding queue and to be considered prioritized for one or more of the resources available to persons on that queue". It is possible for a client to hold places on both queues if they have participated in both assessments and received a threshold score on each assessment.

Matching and Referral from the Housing Queue- The individuals/households on the Housing Queue who have the highest threshold scores are considered to be in the "PSH (permanent supportive housing) pool". The County Office of Homeless Care and Coordination determines the size of the PSH pool annually by estimating the number of housing opportunities anticipated in the coming year, both from vacancies and from new projects coming online, and then establishing a threshold score that will lead to a number of potentially eligible households that is roughly twice the number of anticipated vacancies anticipated in the next 12 months.

Individuals/households in the PSH pool are matched to available housing referrals when CES staff is notified of vacancies at permanent supportive housing sites or openings on wait lists for programs such as Shelter Plus Care. Applicants are referred in groups of three or more per vacancy, based on building or program criteria. (see Volume One, Part Two, Sections 19 and 20 for information about Permanent Supportive Housing)

When an individual is offered a housing referral, they are required to present “core housing readiness” documentation to CES staff at the time the referral is made. Documentation is also presented to the housing site at the time the application is submitted. (This documentation is sometimes called a “Housing and Public Benefits Portfolio”). Medical case managers and housing navigators play a vital role in ensuring that their client is “document ready” and that core housing documents are immediately available. Individuals who are “matched” to an available housing opportunity are typically asked to provide the following documents:

- Copy of a CA-DMV picture ID or drivers’ license for each adult household member
- Social Security cards and birth certificates for all household members. (Birth certificates are required for adult household members as well as minors).
- Current verification of each source of income and current verification of all assets, including checking accounts and prepaid debit cards that are used for payment of benefits such as SSI.
- Documentation from housing case managers or housing navigators establishing a history of literal or chronic homelessness.
- Documentation from medical providers establishing proof of disability (e.g., verification of diagnosis in the case of HOPWA permanent supportive housing units).

Section 5: The HUD Continuum of Care

The HUD Continuum of Care, or HUD CoC, is the largest source of federal grant funding for homeless services and for housing programs that serve people who are moving to housing from homelessness. Established in 2009 as part of the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act, the HUD CoC administers a homeless services program that includes the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) program, which funds emergency shelters, Shelter Plus Care, the Supportive Housing Program, and the Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation SRO (Single Room Occupancy) Program.

HUD Continuum of Care funds are used to “promote long-term housing stability by helping individuals and families experiencing homelessness move into permanent housing with access to supportive services”. All programs funded by the HUD Continuum of Care use a “housing first” approach to providing housing and services to individuals and families that are experiencing homelessness.

HUD-designated Continuum of Care organizations also play an important role in local planning and priority-setting for homelessness services by providing a forum for coordination between local government agencies and non-profit service providers. In Alameda County, the local HUD Continuum of Care entity is EveryOne Home, which describes itself as follows:

“a unique collaboration among community stakeholders, cities and Alameda County government agencies representing three separate care systems — homeless services, public health services and mental health services — that share overlapping client populations. The collaboration arose from their recognition that stable housing is a

critical cornerstone to the health and well-being of homeless and at-risk people, and our communities.”

EveryOne Home also conducts the County’s annual Point-In-Time Count of people experiencing homelessness. The most recent count, conducted in February 2022, identified 9,747 people in Alameda County who were residing in shelters, transitional housing, safe havens, vehicles, tents, abandoned buildings and other places not intended for habitation on the night of the count, an increase of 22% since the count was last conducted in 2019.

In its role as the HUD-mandated policy oversight entity that reviews the work of the Alameda County Coordinated Entry System (CES), EveryOne Home has created a System Coordination Committee that reviews CES policies, establishes participation expectations, develops protocols related to data collection, data quality and data sharing. The committee is made up of representatives from agencies throughout the County that provide services related to homelessness or that represent the interests of persons who are currently experiencing homelessness or are formerly homeless.

Section 6: Emergency Shelters and Respite Housing

Emergency Shelters:

PLWH who are experiencing homelessness can be referred to one of 25 HOPWA-funded beds at the EOCP Crossroads Shelter in Oakland. The referral must be made by a Ryan White medical case manager and must be accompanied by confirmation of negative TB and COVID tests, a letter of diagnosis, and a copy of relevant documentation from the individual’s chart indicating that they are literally homeless. Medical case managers should call the shelter at (510) 532-3211 to determine if there is an available bed and to arrange an intake interview for their patient.

In addition to the beds provided to PLWH, the Crossroads Shelter operates as a CES Housing Resource Center and offers a rapid rehousing program and shelter beds for families, a 20-bed medical respite unit, a group of beds funded by the VA’s Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) initiative, and a realignment housing program for individuals on probation.

Many shelters in Alameda County have beds that do not require a referral from the housing crisis response (CES) system. As examples, the Dorothy Day House operates an emergency storm shelter in Berkeley for adults, and Berkeley Food and Housing operates a short-term shelter for adult men as well as a shelter program for veterans. St. Vincent de Paul operates adult shelters in Fremont, Livermore and Oakland that offer both “walk-up” and “reservation” beds. City Team, a faith-based organization, operates a men's shelter in Oakland charging \$5 for a night’s stay and a meal, along with a bridge housing program for those in recovery from addiction. Presbyterian churches in South Hayward and Castro Valley also operate shelter programs. Operation Dignity, a veterans’ organization, operates a shelter in Oakland and transitional housing programs in Berkeley and Alameda. Time for Change Foundation operates the Brighter Futures Home for Women in Hayward, a shelter program for formerly-incarcerated

women who are experiencing homelessness and who are seeking to be reunified with their children.

Shelters in Alameda County that accommodate families with children include Les Marquis House in Hayward, operated by FESCO (Family Emergency Shelter Coalition), Sojourner House in Livermore, Building a Solid Foundation in Oakland, and the Salvation Army Emergency Shelter for Families in Oakland.

The interim emergency housing and shelter network operated by BOSS (Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency) consists of the Ursula Sherman Village in Berkeley, which serves homeless disabled adults and families, the South County Homeless Project in Hayward, for which a CES referral is required, the Casa Maria Safe Haven in Oakland, which requires a referral from Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services, the Fairmont Navigation Center Tiny Homes Village in Castro Valley and the Wood Street Safe Parking Site, which requires a referral from the City of Oakland.

Covenant House California in Oakland offers shelter for homeless and/or trafficked youth aged 18-24, as does Ruby's Place which offers shelter to minors aged 13-17, Transitional Age Youth 18-24, and victims of domestic violence and/or trafficking. Ruby's Place also operates a shelter for male-identified or nonbinary victims of trafficking.

Some of the above shelters operate somewhat like transitional housing programs, allowing their residents to stay for several weeks or months. The BOSS programs described above typically allow a 6-month stay with possible extensions, and the EOCP Crossroads shelter often allows its PLWH residents occupying "T-1" beds to stay for several months if they are participating in case management and demonstrating efforts to obtain housing).

The City of Oakland, in partnership with local non-profit agencies such as Operation Dignity, Roots Community Health Center and Family Bridges, operates several community cabin communities which are located at 27th Street and Northgate Avenue, Mandela Parkway near 34th Street, Miller Avenue near E. 15th Street, and Oak Street near 6th and 7th Streets. Additional tiny home communities are also located at 673 Hegenberger Road in Oakland (operated by Youth Spirit Artworks), in Castro Valley at the Fairmont Navigation Center (operated by BOSS), and in Alameda (operated by the Alameda Point Collaborative).

Information about available beds at many shelters can be obtained by calling 2-1-1. Resource specialists at 2-1-1 gather twice-daily information about available shelter beds, including beds in DV shelters, and the most up-to-date information can be obtained by calling in the late morning and/or mid-afternoon. In addition, 2-1-1 has up-to-date information about extreme weather shelters that operate on a first-come, first-serve basis during unseasonably hot, cold or rainy weather.

Respite Housing and Housing for Persons who are Medically Vulnerable:

According to the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, “medical respite care is acute and post-acute care for persons experiencing homelessness who are too ill or frail to recover from a physical illness or injury on the streets but are not ill enough to be in a hospital... It is short-term residential care that allows individuals experiencing homelessness the opportunity to rest in a safe environment while accessing medical care and other supportive services.”

The following medical respite care programs are currently operating in Alameda County. In addition, for case-by-case assistance in locating emergency housing for PLWH who are medically fragile, the social workers at Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless offer valuable guidance and support to medical case managers/medical social workers.

The EOCP Crossroads Shelter contains a 20-bed respite care unit for patients who are experiencing homelessness and have been recently discharged from hospitals operated by the Alameda Health System. Stays can last up to 90 days.

Bay Area Community Services (BACS) provides recently-discharged homeless patients with up to 4 weeks of respite housing through their Recuperative Care program at the Henry Robinson Multi Service Center, 559 16th Street, Oakland. Nursing support and case management are provided, as well as daily wellness checks, care coordination and support for self-administration of medications. Hands-on nursing care is not provided but visiting care providers are allowed.

Bay Area Community Services (BACS) also operates Amber House, located at 516 31st Street, Oakland. Amber House provides support following psychiatric hospitalization or as a short-term alternative to hospitalization. Services include individual and group therapy, psychiatric evaluation, medication support, crisis assessment and crisis management, and life-skills support.

Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (BOSS) has set aside fifteen “tiny homes” for use as medical respite housing at the Fairmont Campus Navigation Center’s Tiny Homes Village in Castro Valley. Respite care is offered to individuals experiencing homelessness who are too ill or frail to recover from a physical illness or injury on the street. Prospective residents are referred through Alameda County CES, with priority being given to residents of Mid-County (San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Hayward, Castro Valley, and other unincorporated areas in Mid-County).

LifeLong Medical Care operates LifeLong Adeline Recuperative Care, a 27-bed respite housing site that is located at 2730 Adeline Street in Oakland. The site provides 31-45 days of medical respite care and opened in 2019.

Since June 2020, Berkeley Food and Housing Project has operated the Berkeley Respite Program in partnership with the City of Berkeley. The program is located at two locations, consisting of 18 RV trailers and a single-family home, and provides daily wellness checks, home-delivered meals, case management services, laundry services and the provision of hygiene and cleaning supplies.

The Alameda Point Collaborative is currently partnering with LifeLong Medical Care and Mercy Housing to create the Alameda Wellness Campus, which will open in 2024 and will provide integrated care to 50 homeless seniors and other unhoused adults with complex health conditions.

Part Three

Other Programs

Section 7: Project Independence

Project Independence is a HOPWA-funded housing subsidy program that is administered by the Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department. The aim of the program is to promote housing stability among PLWH through a shallow rental subsidy, case management and services coordination support. Project Independence also contains provisions for covering the cost of accessibility modifications that allow the tenant to continue living independently.

To be eligible for Project independence, a PLWH must be an Alameda County resident whose household income is at or below 50% AMI (very low income). When openings are available, priority is given to households with extremely low incomes (30% AMI). Project Independence cannot be combined with any other government housing subsidy (e.g., Housing Choice or Project-Based Vouchers or Shelter Plus Care), and Project Independence participants are not eligible for rental assistance under the HOPWA Short-Term Rental, Mortgage and Utility Assistance (STRMU) program.

Households that receive Project Independence must live in rental housing that meets HUD rent guidelines and Housing Quality Standards. Applicant households cannot be paying over 90% of their income for rent at the time of application. Rent reviews and unit inspections are conducted by Project Independence staff prior to application approval and on an annual basis thereafter, and the client is required to meet with a case manager/services coordinator on a quarterly basis, at minimum.

Project Independence is not a time-limited housing subsidy in that a recipient can continue to receive the subsidy as long as the program's eligibility requirements are met. Subsidies range from \$204 for a one-person household living in a studio or SRO unit, to \$496 for a household of three or more people living in a 3-bedroom unit. A one-bedroom unit is subsidized at a rate of \$311 for one person and \$364 for two people. The subsidy amount is reduced if the full subsidy would bring the tenant's portion of the rent below 30% of their adjusted income.

Documentation to accompany the application includes a Picture ID and Social Security card for each household member, income verifications for all household members, dated within 60 days or less, a letter of diagnosis, and a copy of the lease or rental agreement. At the time of subsidy approval, the landlord is required to submit a copy of their IRS Form W-9.

Note: Prior to 2019, three AIDS Service Organizations and clinics enrolled and served Project Independence clients: AIDS Project of the East Bay (APEB), Tri-City Health Center (now Bay Area Community Health or BACH) and the Yvette A. Flunder Foundation (YAFF). Participants who were originally approved to receive Project Independence subsidies from APEB and YAFF continue to receive PI subsidies and case management support from these agencies, but all new Project Independence clients since 2019 are enrolled through Bay Area Community Health.

Section 8: East Bay Innovations, California Community Transitions Program

East Bay Innovations provides a variety of housing options and transitional care services to individuals with complex medical needs, with a special focus on persons who have been placed in skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) or higher levels of care. Through the California Community Transitions program, individuals who have stayed in a SNF for 90 consecutive days or longer are eligible to receive support as they prepare to return home or assistance in locating new housing that can accommodate their disabilities and specialized medical needs.

For persons who are able to return to the home where they lived prior to hospitalization, CCT staff (transition coordinators and nurses) conducts clinical and psychosocial assessments, develops care plans to identify needs, and works with contractors to identify and plan for necessary modifications to the home. Before the patient is discharged from the SNF to their home, CCT staff works with contractors to complete the modifications, orders medical equipment, makes referrals to home health agencies and assists the client in choosing and hiring IHSS workers.

For persons who need to find new housing, CCT staff (transition coordinators and nurses) conducts clinical and psychosocial assessments, develops care plans to identify needs, and supports the client in acquiring core housing documents. Staff then assists the client in applying for housing that is affordable and accessible. When appropriate housing is located, staff identifies the need for home modifications, works with contractors and supervises the work, orders durable medical equipment and home set-up supplies, assists in the selection and hiring of IHSS workers, and provides funds for first month's rent and security deposit.

Part Four

The Landlord, The Rental Unit and the Move-in Process

Section 9: Housing Quality and Safety Considerations

The following criteria are based on the HUD Housing Quality Standards that are used to determine if an affordable or subsidized unit, or a unit being subsidized by the Housing Choice Voucher Program, is in acceptable physical condition. This list can also be a useful guide for tenants when viewing available units and making decisions about safety and livability.

- The interior of the housing unit, including all fixtures and equipment, and all exterior areas must be maintained in safe and sanitary condition.
- To ensure that heat, lights, cooking equipment and plumbing fixtures are in acceptable condition, all utilities should be connected and turned on. If the property owner is furnishing any appliances, they should be present, clean, operable and connected to power.

Access:

- Entrance and egress from the unit must be directly to the outside or to an indoor common area such as a hallway. It is never permissible to have to pass through another household's living space in order to gain access to the unit.
- Exterior doors should be solid and equipped with a single-cylinder deadbolt lock that can be opened from the inside without a key. (This requirement also applies to metal security doors). Double key deadbolt locks are not safe as people can be trapped inside in a fire or other emergency. Be aware of repaired cracks in the door frame that could indicate prior burglaries or forced entry.

Safety:

- The building should have adequate outside lighting.
- Smoke Detectors: At minimum, a working smoke detector should be present on each level of the home including the basement. Apartments that are newly built or recently renovated are often required by the local housing code to have a working smoke detector present in each bedroom and in the hallways. Both battery-operated and hard-wired smoke detectors are acceptable.
- Fire Extinguisher: Ideally there should be a fire extinguisher in the kitchen.
- Lead-Based Paint: Lead paint is likely to be present in buildings built before 1978, and older layers of paint that are exposed (cracked, chipped, scaling or peeling) are likely to be toxic. Abatement of lead paint must be done using methods that are strictly regulated.
- Security Bars on Windows: Window security bars are effective in preventing illegal entry but they can be dangerous in the event of an emergency such as a fire. In all rooms used for living, (i.e., other than a bathroom or kitchen) security bars must have a safety release latch to permit escape unless there is an exit directly to the outside. (If there are two windows in a bedroom, only one set of window bars needs to have a release latch).
- Water heater: It must have an earthquake strap to secure it to the wall, a pressure release valve, and an overflow or discharge pipe that goes to within six inches of the floor.

Sanitation:

- There should be no signs of pest or rodent infestation either within the unit or in outside areas.
- Exterior conditions: No garbage, debris, or non-working vehicles on the premises
- Adequate containers for disposal of garbage (bins or garbage cans)
- Indoor space for proper disposal of garbage.
- There should be no garbage or debris in the unit when it is being shown to potential tenants.
- Each room should have adequate ventilation.

Exterior of Building:

- The building should be weathertight and structurally sound.
- The roof should be in sound condition, with no leaks.
- There should be no broken or missing steps.
- For exterior stairs, a handrail must be provided if there are four or more consecutive steps or risers. Handrails must be securely mounted to the walls and horizontal surfaces.
- Balconies should have guardrails that are secure and that meet the height requirements of the local housing code.
- A locking mailbox must be provided.

Heat, Lighting and Electricity:

- Heating equipment must be in good operating condition and capable of providing heat to the entire unit. To confirm that the heater works, gas and electricity should be on at the time of the inspection. (In some areas, the same requirements will also apply to cooling equipment such as air conditioning or fans).
- Each room should have two electric outlets, or one outlet and one permanent light fixture (typically a ceiling light). Electricity should be on at the time of the inspection.
- Electric outlets and light switches should have covers and outlets in kitchens and bathrooms should meet grounding requirements.

Walls, Ceilings, Floors and Interior Doors:

- While new paint is not a requirement, wall and ceiling paint should be in good condition.
- Walls should be free of holes, and ceilings should be free of signs of leaks or water damage.
- Floor coverings should be in good condition and free of tripping hazards (minor stains on carpeting are acceptable; however, the presence of extensive stains will possibly affect the amount of rent that is offered for a unit being inspected by housing authority staff on behalf of a Housing Choice Voucher applicant).
- Interior doors should have working hinges and doorknobs that close and latch properly. Doors should be free of holes or other damage.
- Each bedroom must have a closet with a door. A portable closet is acceptable.

Windows:

- All windows that are accessible to the outside must have working locks.
- Window glass must be intact, without cracks or broken glass.
- Windows should stay open without being propped open.
- Windows must be large enough to provide ventilation for the room.
- Window coverings should be provided in the living room and bedrooms.

Kitchen:

- If the property owner is providing the stove, refrigerator and any other appliances, they must be clean and in working condition. Stove burners must self-ignite, i.e., the pilot lights on a gas stove should not need to be lit with a match.
- All plumbing fixtures must be in working condition, with no leaks, dripping faucets, or clogged drains.
- Both hot and cold water must be available, with adequate water pressure.
- There should be adequate space for storage and preparation of food (cabinets and counters).

- Cabinets and counters should be in good condition.

Bathroom(s):

- Adequate ventilation must be provided by an openable window or a working exhaust fan.
- All plumbing fixtures must be in working condition, with no leaks, dripping faucets, or clogged drains.
- Both hot and cold water must be available, with adequate water pressure.

Section 10: The Lease or Rental Agreement

Leases and rental agreements are legal contracts that define the mutual rights and responsibilities of the landlord/property owner and the tenant. A lease or rental agreement states the names of the lessor (landlord) and the lessee (tenant), along with the full legal address of the property being rented. The lease or rental agreement will also include the address or equivalent information about the landlord, and it will name all of the occupants that are permitted to live in the unit as members of the tenant's household. The lease or rental agreement will state the start date, the amount due from the tenant at move-in, the monthly rent amount and security deposit, the utilities that will be paid by either the landlord or the tenant, and the appliances that are being provided by the landlord.

Term of Lease or Agreement:

Most leases are for a year; but six-month leases are not uncommon. A lease is binding for the full term and the tenant is not permitted to move out before the expiration date of the lease without the landlord's prior consent. In many market rate rentals, tenants are financially responsible for the rent for the full term of the lease if they "break" the lease by moving out before it expires. Leases are renewable if both the property owner and the tenant agree to the renewal terms.

With the exception of affordable/subsidized housing and units in cities with "Just Cause" ordinances in place, a property owner may legally decide against renewing an expiring lease without needing to inform the tenant as to why they have decided not to renew the lease. California law, or the relevant local Just Cause ordinance, spells out the amount of notice a property owner must give their tenant if their lease is not being renewed.

Rental agreements are open-ended; the dwelling unit is rented on a month-to-month basis. In most cases, either the landlord or the tenant may terminate the rental agreement at the end of any month with 30 days' notice. In cities with Just Cause ordinances, the property owner may be required to give a 60-day notice to terminate a month-to-month agreement.

Changes to Lease/Rental Agreement Terms: When the property owner wishes to make changes to any of the terms of the lease or rental agreement, they must give the tenant at least 30 days' written notice of the change. In cities with Just Cause or rent stabilization ordinances, the property owner may be prevented from making certain changes in the terms of the lease, such

as changes to who pays utilities, changes in the pet policy, and changes as to who is responsible for maintenance work, or for providing and maintaining the stove and/or refrigerator.

Rent Amount:

A lease or rental agreement also states the monthly rent amount to be paid by the tenant to the property owner, along with information about where the rent is to be paid, how it must be paid (e.g., check, money order, cash), and the amount of any fees that will be charged for checks that are returned for insufficient funds. If the lease or rental agreement begins on any day other than the first of the month, the prorated rent due at move-in will also be stated. If late fees are charged, the lease or rental agreement must also specify the amount of the late fee and the date on which it will be charged (e.g., the 5th of the month). California law governs the maximum amount that can be charged for late fees or returned check fees.

Many cities in Alameda County have local rent control or rent limitation ordinances; however, rental units that are federally subsidized (with either tenant-based or project-based subsidies) are always exempt from rent control laws. For persons with Housing Choice Vouchers, the Housing Authority negotiates the rent increase with the landlord at the time the Voucher lease is renewed and calculates the new Voucher rent according to the formula used by the HCV program. In cities with local rent control or rent limitation ordinances, private market landlords are subject to city restrictions on the amount of rent increase they can impose.

Security Deposits:

The lease or rental agreement also states the amount of the security deposit the landlord will collect when the tenant moves into the rental unit. California law states that a security deposit for an unfurnished rental unit can be no more than two times the amount of the rent, and no more than three times the rent if the rental unit is furnished. For affordable or subsidized properties, the security deposit may be equivalent to the tenant's portion of one month's rent or it may be a flat amount; however, tenants with Housing Choice Vouchers are likely to be charged a security deposit that is equal to two times the rent amount, as allowed by law. Other move-in charges, such as non-refundable cleaning fees and the payment of last month's rent in addition to first month's rent and a security deposit, are not found in leases for affordable or subsidized housing. A landlord who rents to a tenant with a Housing Choice Voucher is permitted to charge only the first month's rent and the security deposit.

In California, non-refundable security deposits are not allowed. The cities of Berkeley and Hayward have ordinances that require the landlord to pay tenants interest on the security deposit, starting from the first day of tenancy.

The security deposit can be used to clean the unit when the tenant moves out (if the apartment is not as clean as when they moved in), to repair damages that are beyond normal wear and tear, and to cover unpaid rent or other balances due. While landlords are not required to do a walk-through inspection with the tenant before they move out, they must do so if the tenant requests an inspection. If requested, the walk-through inspection should be done in the last two

weeks of the tenancy. The tenant has the right to be present and should receive a written copy of the inspection report.

Landlords have 21 calendar days (15 working days) to refund the security deposit. If a portion of the deposit is spent on repairs or used for unpaid rent, the landlord must provide an accounting of how any portion of the deposit was spent. An estimate is acceptable if the repairs are so extensive that they cannot be completed within 21 days. Unless the lease specifically allows it, a tenant who has given notice to vacate cannot use the security deposit as payment of their last month's rent.

Additional Clauses: Leases or rental agreements often contain, or are accompanied by, house rules that spell out additional requirements and expectations concerning pets, renters insurance, parking, guests, subletting, noise and other unacceptable behavior, and emergency situations that require the landlord to enter the unit without advance notice. The lease or house rules will also describe the procedures for tenants to use when reporting the need for maintenance or repairs and will address issues such as tenant-caused damage to the unit and tenant modifications to the unit such as interior painting, lock changes or installation of window bars.

Note: State and local landlord-tenant laws change regularly, and local landlord-tenant laws vary from city to city. Please contact the [California Department of Consumer Affairs](#) for up-to-date information on California law. For local ordinances, please contact the housing department in the city where the home is located.

Section 11: Fair Housing Protections

Housing discrimination is illegal under both federal and California law. The primary federal fair housing and civil rights laws are:

- The Fair Housing Act of 1968 prohibits discriminatory housing practices in the sale, rental and financing of housing based on “protected characteristics” such as race, religion, sex, and national origin.
- The Federal Fair Housing Amendments (FFHA) Act of 1988 amended the 1968 law, adding protections for families with children and for individuals with physical or mental disabilities. It also strengthened the enforcement provisions of the Fair Housing Act of 1968. In addition, the FFHA Act addresses unit modifications as a reasonable accommodation of a disability and makes it illegal for a housing provider to ask questions that are designed to determine if an applicant has a disability, unless these questions are used to determine eligibility for housing designated for disabled persons.
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits public entities, which include state and local governments and special purpose districts, from discriminating against

individuals with disabilities in all their services, programs, and activities, including housing and housing-related services such as housing search assistance.

- Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits private entities that own, lease, and operate places of public accommodation, including homeless shelters, social service establishments, and other public accommodations providing housing, from discriminating on the basis of disability.
- The Civil Rights Act of 1966 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.
- In addition, HUD program regulations, such as its Equal Access Rule, prohibit discriminatory eligibility determinations in HUD-assisted or HUD-insured housing programs based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. Projects funded by the HUD Continuum of Care, HOPWA, and the Emergency Solutions Grant Program are covered by these regulations.

Taken together, Federal fair housing laws prohibit housing discrimination that is based on race/color, national origin, ancestry (including primary language spoken), religion, sex/gender, familial status (e.g., families with children), and physical and/or mental disabilities. Additional protections pertaining to sexual orientation and gender identity are provided in housing that is publicly rather than privately funded and/or operated. The provisions of the FHAA Act apply to activities related to advertising, application screening and review, lease terms and conditions, and evictions and program terminations in Section 8 housing programs, HUD-subsidized and Low Income Housing Tax Credit buildings, emergency shelters, transitional housing and shared housing.

There are certain types of rental housing that are not covered by federal fair housing laws. Rentals of single family dwellings are exempt from federal fair housing laws, as are rentals of duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes, but only if the landlord resides in one of the units and rents the others. A person who rents a room in their house is exempt from fair housing laws, but if more than one room is rented to lodgers, each of the individuals renting a room is protected. Fair housing laws also apply to mobile home parks and the persons/companies that operate them.

In California, the primary fair housing laws are the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) and the Unruh Civil Rights Act, both of which were enacted in 1959. The FEHA prohibits discrimination in employment and housing based on a person's race, religion, national origin and ancestry, and the Unruh Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination by business establishments. These laws have been amended numerous times, with the addition of prohibitions against retaliation and sexual harassment and the creation of 18 protected classes. California's civil rights laws were consolidated in 1980 under the jurisdiction of the Civil Rights Department (CRD), which is part of the state's Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency.

California state laws are more comprehensive than the federal fair housing laws, and provide additional protections against housing discrimination based on age, marital status, sexual

orientation, gender expression/identity, source of income (including receiving a housing voucher subsidy), medical conditions, primary language spoken, immigration or citizenship status, veteran or active duty military status, and religious expression (e.g., wearing a hijab or other clothing associated with religious observance). The broader protections provided under California law cannot be preempted by Federal law, which offers fewer protections.

Fair housing laws apply to landlords, tenant screening companies, property management companies, real estate agents, home sellers, builders, mortgage lenders, and others. Fair housing laws prohibit discrimination in all aspects of the housing business, including renting or leasing, home sales, mortgage lending and insurance, advertising, new construction and the use of practices such as restrictive covenants. Common examples of discriminatory practices include:

- Refusal to sell, rent, or lease rooms, apartments, condominiums or houses to protected individuals,
- Refusal to negotiate for the sale, rental, or lease of housing,
- Representing that a housing accommodation is not available for inspection, sale, or rental when it is in fact available,
- Denial of a home loan or homeowner's insurance,
- Cancellation or termination of a sale or rental agreement,
- Policies, practices, terms, or conditions that result in unequal access to housing or housing-related services,
- Offering inferior terms, conditions, privileges, facilities or services in connection with the housing accommodation,
- Sexual harassment involving unwanted sexual advances or requiring sexual favors for housing rights or privileges (quid pro quo),
- Refusal to permit, at a disabled tenant's expense, reasonable modifications when necessary to accommodate a disability,
- Refusal to make reasonable accommodations in housing rules, policies, practices, or services where necessary to afford a disabled person equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling,
- Retaliation against someone filing a complaint,
- Overly restrictive rules limiting the activities of daily life for families with children, including where children are allowed to play, and
- Language in leases or rental agreements stating that the tenant waives their fair housing rights

Discrimination in rental housing can be intentional or it can consist of policies that appear to be neutral but have a discriminatory impact on a protected class. Intentional discrimination occurs when individuals/groups experience different treatment in applying for housing, enforcement of the provisions of their lease or rental agreement, response to requests for repairs, etc. Steering applicants toward certain neighborhoods and engaging in efforts to create or maintain segregated housing are also instances of intentional discrimination. Examples of seemingly neutral policies with disparate impacts include making rental documents such as applications, rental agreements or leases available only in English or attempting to evict a survivor of

domestic violence because of criminal activity in their unit, when the survivor was actually the victim of the criminal activity.

Persons who believe that they have been discriminated against in their effort to find or keep their housing may file complaints at the federal or state level, depending on whether or not they are a member of a federal protected class.

For all violations of federal fair housing laws, including violations of those ADA and Sec. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act pertaining to housing discrimination based on disability, a complainant may contact the HUD Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO). The HUD FHEO Office has intake specialists that are available by phone toll-free at 1-800-669-9777 or TTY: 1-800-877-8339.

[An online complaint form in English and Spanish is available at the HUD-FHEO website.](#) The booklet “Are You a Victim of Housing Discrimination?” can be [downloaded and printed here](#). The booklet contains a fillable complaint form that can be submitted by mail to the Fair Housing Hub listed below. The booklet is available in English, Arabic, Cambodian, Chinese, Korean, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

A letter of complaint describing the alleged discriminatory activity can also be submitted by mail. The letter must include the complainant’s name and address, the name and address of the person or organization the complaint is against, the address of the housing or HUD program involved, a brief description of the event(s) that cause the complainant to believe their rights were violated, and the date when the incident occurred. The complaint should be submitted as soon as possible after the alleged violation. In Northern California, the letter should be mailed to:

Fair Housing Hub
U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development
600 Harrison Street, Third Floor
San Francisco, CA 94107-1300

The local (Region 9) Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity can be reached by email at ComplaintsOffice09@hud.gov or by phone at 415-489-6524, toll-free at 800-347-3739, by fax at 415-489-6558, or by TTY at 415-436-6594.

For violations of California fair housing laws, complaints may be directed to the California Civil Rights Department for investigation and possible settlement. Intake forms can be filed by:

- Creating an online account at the [Civil Rights Department website](#) and using their interactive [Cal Civil Rights System, CCRS](#).
- By mail using a printable intake form available on the website. The form is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog and Punjabi.
- By calling the CRD Communications Center at 800-884-1684 (voice), 800-700-2320 (TTY) or California Relay Service at 711
- By email to contact.center@dfeh.ca.gov

- By mail to CRD Headquarters at:
State of California Civil Rights Department
2218 Kausen Drive, Suite 100
Elk Grove CA 94578

All allegations of housing discrimination should include specific facts and any records about the incident(s), including the name and contact information of the person or entity believed to have engaged in discriminatory activity (if known); copies of any documents or other evidence related to the complaint; and the names and contact information of any witnesses (if known).

CRD evaluates the allegations in the intake form and decides whether the state laws enforced by CRD apply to the allegations. If the case is accepted for investigation, CRD independently investigates the facts and the legal issues by reviewing the evidence submitted by both the complainants and respondents. CRD attempts to resolve the dispute through mediation but may also decide to take legal action.

Section 12: Sources of Assistance for Move-In Costs

Note: *The Emergency Financial Assistance Program funded by Part A of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program does not provide financial assistance for move-in costs due to HRSA restrictions.*

The two most well-known and commonly-used programs that provide financial assistance for move-in costs to eligible Alameda County residents are Season of Sharing and the Home Stretch Housing Assistance Fund.

Season of Sharing (SOS): This program provides assistance with first month's rent, security deposit and a limited selection of furniture to eligible individuals and/or households as described below. This program is funded by the Chronicle Season of Sharing (SOS) Fund and is administered by the Alameda County Social Services Agency. Season of Sharing provides one-time assistance to defined groups of people who need emergency housing assistance and/or assistance with critical needs due to a non-recurring crisis beyond their control. Applicants for Season of Sharing assistance must not have received SOS assistance in the past five years, and SOS staff conduct a clearance search to determine if the client has received SOS funds in the past. (Under extreme extenuating circumstances, SOS administrators can approve a second round of assistance).

To be eligible for SOS assistance, the applicant must be a current Alameda County resident who has lived in the County for at least six continuous months. Eligible groups include families with children under age 18; seniors over the age of 55; permanently disabled individuals over 18 who receive SSI or SSDI or whose disability has been verified by a physician; veterans; emancipated/former foster youth ages 18-24; victims of domestic violence or violent crimes

that have occurred within the past 6 months; and persons in the second or third trimester of their pregnancy. Documentation is required to confirm each household's eligibility status. (Applicants who have Housing Choice Vouchers are subject to eligibility restrictions and/or limits on the amount of assistance they may receive).

Persons moving from homelessness to permanent housing, those who have recently experienced a fire or catastrophe, and those who are fleeing domestic violence, are also eligible to receive assistance with furniture. Season of Sharing works with its own furniture vendor, and applicants are offered pre-selected items including a bed and chest of drawers for each household member, a couch, a dinette set and a coffee table.

The application must include proof of all income and a budget form that is reviewed to assure that the applicant can meet their monthly financial obligations on an ongoing basis following receipt of assistance. The application must include an IRS form W-9 establishing the landlord's ownership of the rental property. If the lease has not yet been signed, the prospective landlord may provide a "letter of intent to rent," stating the applicant's name, the address of the proposed rental unit, and the amount of rent and security deposit that will be required. The landlord must state in the letter that they are offering a specific unit to the applicant and must indicate the proposed start date of the new lease.

Interested persons can begin the application process by calling the SOS automated pre-screening line at 510-272-3700. Callers are asked to provide basic information and to answer a series of eligibility questions using their phone keypad. If they meet basic program criteria for consideration, SOS intake staff contacts the applicant for additional screening.

However, it is easier to apply for Season of Sharing with the assistance of a "Community Partner Agency". Community Partner Agencies are community-based organizations whose caseworkers are trained to prepare and submit Season of Sharing applications. For more information about Season of Sharing, including a list of Community Partner Agencies, please visit the [Season of Sharing website](#). The AIDS Housing Information Project (AHIP) at Eden I&R is a Community Partner Agency and will assist PLWH in assembling and submitting applications for SOS move-in assistance.

Inquiries from staff of agencies interested in becoming a Season of Sharing community partner may be sent to sos@acgov.org. Only agencies that have completed a mandatory orientation may submit applications on behalf of their clients.

Home Stretch Housing Assistance Fund: The Home Stretch Housing Assistance Fund is administered by the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency. It provides flexible financial assistance to literally homeless households for first month's rent, security deposit, furniture and household items and certain other items. In order for a funding request to be approved, the application must contain a rationale for why the funding is necessary and how the assistance will impact the applicant's housing stability.

In order to qualify for assistance, the applicant must be currently experiencing literal homelessness, or must have exited homelessness within the last 60 days. (Individuals who are “couch-surfing,” or who are at imminent risk of homelessness or unstably housed, do not qualify for this program). The Home Stretch Financial Assistance Fund does not pay back rent to prevent eviction.

In order to submit an application for assistance, the applicant must be working with an agency that receives County funding to serve households that are experiencing homelessness, or exiting homelessness, in Alameda County. The service provider assists and supports the client through the application process, completes the application jointly with the client, and submits the application to the Home Stretch Housing Assistance Fund. The applicant and service provider are also asked to participate in Alameda County staff follow-up contacts for up to 13 months after the assistance is provided, in order to obtain information for program evaluation purposes about the applicant’s housing situation and stability.

Assistance is based on need and is available for three broad categories: rental assistance, move-in assistance, and safety and accessibility assistance. Rental assistance consists of payment to a property owner for the first month’s rent and security deposit. Move-in assistance consists of housing application fees, utility start-up costs, essential (non-luxury) home furniture and household items such as food preparation items and bed/bath linens, and non-emergency, non-medical transport such as a moving company. For a household of one person, the maximum allowable amount for rental assistance and move-in assistance is \$4,000, which must include taxes and shipping costs for furniture and household items. Larger households are eligible for an additional \$500 per household member, provided the overall \$8,000 limit is not exceeded.

Safety and accessibility assistance refers to items and services that are medically necessary and that are needed to make the new home accessible and safe (such as a hospital bed or Hoyer lift) or unit modifications such as grab bars and ramps. Requests for safety and accessibility items and services must be accompanied by a written verification of need from a medical professional and a verification that an attempt was made to cover the cost of the items using insurance. Proof of landlord approval is needed for unit modifications. The maximum allowable amount that can be approved for safety and accessibility assistance is \$8,000, based on need.

The application must contain documentation that establishes the client is eligible for the Home Stretch Housing Assistance Fund, and must contain HMIS Forms, a lease or rental agreement (or letter of intent to rent from the landlord if the client has not yet moved in), and an IRS Form W-9 and other vendor information from the landlord. Applications requesting rental assistance (first month’s rent and deposit) should be submitted prior to or at move-in and must be completed within 30 days of move-in. For other types of assistance, completed applications must be submitted within 60 days of move-in. All requests (including orders being placed and payments made by County staff) must be completed within 90 days of move-in.

The Home Stretch Housing Assistance Fund provides a checklist of “approved home furnishings and household items” which should be used as a guide in selecting furniture and household items. Only those items on the list will be approved for purchase. For example, the Fund will not pay for the purchase of a television, computer or media equipment. Sales tax and shipping costs are counted toward the maximum cost of move-in assistance. The applicant may choose items from up to two of the Fund’s approved vendors. The service provider compiles gift registries or purchase lists that are forwarded to the Home Stretch Fund’s staff. When the application is approved, the staff orders the items for delivery to the applicant.

For more information about the Home Stretch Housing Assistance Fund, please email HomeStretchFund@acgov.org or call 510 567-8030. To download forms and documents, please visit the [Home Stretch website](#).

As mentioned earlier, some Rapid Rehousing programs also provide move-in assistance to their enrolled clients. Veterans may seek financial assistance with move-in costs by contacting a local SSVF (Support Services for Veteran Families) organization. In addition, for families who are experiencing homelessness and receiving CalWORKS benefits through the County Social Services Agency, CalWORKs Permanent Homeless Assistance may assist with security deposit and one month’s rent. Individuals who wish to request this assistance should contact their eligibility worker, visit a Social Services Agency office, or call the Customer Service Call Center at 510-263-2420 or 1-888-999-4772.

Part Five

Maintaining Housing

Section 13: Lease Violations & Program Terminations

Lease Violations and the Eviction Process: In all cases, a 3-day notice to pay or quit is sufficient to begin eviction proceedings for non-payment of rent, and a 3-day notice is sufficient in the case of a major lease violation such as illegal activity, regardless of whether the tenant lives in subsidized/affordable housing or in a city with a Just Cause ordinance. In many cities with Just Cause ordinances, the landlord must provide the local Rent Stabilization Board with copies of all eviction notices or unlawful detainer actions they initiate.

Common lease violations that, if proven, are severe enough to warrant a 3-day notice to terminate the tenancy or “unconditional quit notice”, include:

- a pattern of non-payment of rent,
- continuing to violate a lease provision after written notice to stop,
- willfully causing or allowing substantial damage to the unit and/or refusing to pay for repairs,
- nuisance behavior and disorderly conduct,
- use of the unit for an illegal purpose,
- unlawful conduct involving weapons or ammunition,

- domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, and
- threats to commit a crime that would result in death or great bodily harm to any person on the premises.

In some cases, notices are written in such a way that the tenant may be given the option of remaining in the unit if they are able to correct or “cure” the lease violation. Examples include paying the rent that is owed (pay or quit notice) or getting rid of a pet in a situation where the lease doesn’t allow pets (cure or quit notice).

An unlawful detainer action (eviction) begins with the service of a notice on the tenant by the landlord/property owner. Depending on the circumstances, the notice might be a 3-day, 30-day or 60-day notice. California law spells out requirements for proper service of a notice to terminate a tenancy. A notice must be served by personally giving the notice to the tenant, by substitute service on a person of suitable age at the tenant’s home or workplace, or by posting the notice and mailing a copy to the address under lease. Once the notice period has expired, the landlord may initiate an unlawful detainer action by filing a Summons and Complaint in court and serving the tenant. Depending on the type of service, a tenant is given a deadline of varying length in which to file an answer to the complaint.

An eviction can be challenged by a tenant if they believe the landlord has acted unlawfully, or if the service was improper, or if the eviction appears to be discriminatory or retaliatory. A tenant may also answer the summons and complaint by alleging that there is a valid reason why rent was not paid, e.g., rent was withheld because the unit was uninhabitable due to non-repair of a major system such as heat or plumbing.

If a tenant answers the summons and complaint, the case is set for trial. (If the tenant does not respond to the summons within the stated time period, the landlord can be granted a default judgment). If the judge finds in the tenant’s favor, the case is dismissed. If the judge finds in the landlord’s favor, the landlord is awarded a judgment for possession of the unit, or for possession and the amount of rent owed, including legal fees). The last stages in the unlawful detainer process are the posting of the impending eviction by the Sheriff’s Department, followed by an eviction by the Sheriff’s Department if the tenant has not already moved out.

An eviction will stay on an individual’s record for up to seven years and will appear in the public records section of their credit report. California law requires that access by credit reporting agencies to unlawful detainer court records must be blocked for 60 days. After 60 days, if the judgment has not been satisfied or the case dismissed, the unlawful detainer can then be reported to credit reporting agencies.

Family Obligations and Grounds for Termination of Assistance: Residents of federally subsidized housing, such as those with Project-Based or Housing Choice Vouchers, must not only comply with the terms of their lease; they must also fulfill the subsidy program’s family obligations in order to continue to be eligible for assistance.

- The first group of obligations pertains to providing all requested information that is deemed necessary to establish the family's eligibility for assistance. This information must be "true and complete."
 - Examples include proof of identity (including social security numbers), proof of citizenship or eligible immigration status, and verification of all sources and amounts of income and all assets held by family members.
 - Program participants are also required to promptly report all changes in family composition such as the birth, adoption or court-awarded custody of a child. The addition of a family member (spouse, partner, live-in aide, etc.) must be requested in writing and approved by the property owner and subsidizing agency before the person moves into the unit. Adults being added to the family's household are usually subject to a criminal background check.
 - Prompt notification must also be provided when a family member no longer lives in the unit.
- The second group of family obligations relate to issues concerning occupancy.
 - The family is required to use the assisted unit as its only residence. The family is not allowed to receive multiple subsidies for the same unit, or for several different units under other housing assistance programs.
 - Subleasing the unit, assigning the lease, or transferring the unit is grounds for termination of assistance. Subleasing includes receiving payment for rent and utility costs from a person living in the unit who is not named on the lease.
 - The family must notify the housing authority and the property owner in writing before moving out of the unit or terminating the lease and must comply with all lease requirements regarding written notice to the owner. The written notice must be given to the housing authority at the same time that the landlord is notified.
 - When all members of the family are to be absent from the unit for more than 30 calendar days, the family must provide written notice at the start of the extended absence.
 - The family must not own, or have any ownership interest, in the unit and they must not receive Housing Choice Voucher assistance to rent a unit that is owned by a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild or sibling of any member of the family, unless the arrangement has been approved by the housing authority as a reasonable accommodation of a disability.
- The third group of obligations pertains to maintaining the dwelling unit in "decent, safe and sanitary condition".
 - The family is responsible for paying utility bills as required under the lease, and for providing and maintaining any appliances that the owner is not required to provide.
 - The family is responsible for any damage to the unit or premises that is beyond normal wear and tear and is caused by any household member or guest, even if the damage is accidental. (Damage beyond normal wear and tear can also be charged against the family's security deposit).
 - The family is required to allow periodic unit inspections at reasonable times and after reasonable notice. An adult family member or another designated adult must be present for the inspection.

- The fourth group of obligations concern violations of the lease. The housing authority will determine if serious or repeated lease violations have occurred based on available evidence such as a court-ordered eviction or an owner's notice to evict.
 - Common examples of serious or repeated lease violations include nonpayment of rent, disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property, living or housekeeping habits that cause damage to the units or premises, and criminal activity.
 - The family must promptly provide the housing authority with a copy of any eviction notice received from the owner.
- The final group of obligations concern illegal activity.
 - Family members must not commit fraud, bribery or any other "corrupt or criminal act" in connection with the housing program.
 - Family members must not engage in drug-related criminal activity, violent criminal activity, or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity. (The same prohibition applies to engaging in abuse of alcohol in a way that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of others).
 - HUD requires that a housing authority terminate a family's rental assistance if any household member has ever been convicted of the manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally-assisted housing.

Section 14: Financial Assistance Programs for Rent and Utilities

Emergency financial assistance programs are designed to provide one-time assistance that enable a tenant or home-owner with an "eligible qualifying emergency need" to bring their rent or mortgage current and/or prevent disconnection of basic utility services such as gas, electricity, water, sewer and garbage collection. The nature of the emergency situation must be documented in the application, along with a stability plan that outlines both the steps the applicant will take and the supports they will receive to prevent a future rent delinquency. These programs are not rental subsidies and are not designed to address an on-going situation in which the applicant's income is not sufficient to cover their housing and utility expenses.

Ryan White Emergency Financial Assistance Program (EFA): PLWH who are enrolled in the Ryan White Program and who are behind on rent and/or utilities are potentially eligible to receive assistance through the Ryan White Part A Emergency Financial Assistance program. Applications must be submitted on the client's behalf by a Ryan White medical case manager. The application must include a "Statement of Delinquent Rent Owed" and an IRS Form W-9 from the property owner, and a statement from the medical case manager outlining the client's current household situation, the unforeseen situation leading to the need for emergency funds, and action steps that will be taken to eliminate future need for emergency assistance.

Note: assistance limits are contingent on availability of Ryan White funds at the time of application.

STRMU (Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, and Utility Assistance) Program: This HOPWA program helps currently housed PLWH to remain in their current residence by providing rental or mortgage assistance and assistance with unpaid basic utility bills. In Alameda County, the STRMU program is administered by the Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department. Applicants must be Alameda County residents whose income is below 80% of AMI (currently \$80,000/year for a household of one and \$91,440/year for a household of two). Applicants must be U.S. Citizens or have lawful immigration status.

For renters, eligible costs as of 2022 include up to 21 weeks of back rent capped at \$1,500 per month as well as late fees. The program will not cover the current month's rent, and an arrearage statement or notice to pay or quit must accompany the application. Applicants who are home-owners must request assistance before a notice of foreclosure has been filed. For home-owners, eligible costs include up to 21 weeks of mortgage payments in arrears, late fees, taxes, insurance and other escrowed fees. Renters and home-owners can also apply for assistance with bills for basic utilities that are in arrears. Current month utility charges are not covered. Basic utilities include gas, electricity, water, sewer and garbage collection. Phone and internet bills are not covered by STRMU.

For rental assistance, the application must be accompanied by proof of identity and social security cards for all household members, verification of all sources of income, a verification of diagnosis, a statement of arrearage from the applicant's landlord, a copy of the lease or rental agreement, and a copy of the property owner's W-9. A housing stability plan, budget, and statement of need that explains the nature of the applicant's emergency circumstances must also accompany the application. If utility assistance is being requested, copies of the most recent utility bills must be provided.

While application materials and instructions are available at the [Housing & Community Development Department's website](#), it is preferable for the application to be completed by the applicant's case manager.

Season of Sharing (SOS): Season of Sharing is funded by the Chronicle Season of Sharing Fund and is administered by the Alameda County Social Services Agency. Season of Sharing assists with delinquent rent and utility payments and offers one-time assistance to defined groups of people who need emergency housing assistance and/or assistance with critical needs due to a non-recurring crisis that is beyond their control. Applicants for Season of Sharing assistance must not have received SOS assistance in the past five years. Prior to reviewing an application SOS staff conducts a clearance search to determine if the client has received SOS funds in the past. (Under extreme extenuating circumstances, SOS administrators can approve a second round of assistance).

To be eligible for SOS assistance, the applicant must be a current Alameda County resident who has lived in the County for at least six continuous months. Eligible groups include families with children under age 18; seniors over the age of 55; permanently disabled individuals over 18 who receive SSI or SSDI or whose disability has been verified by a physician; veterans;

emancipated/former foster youth ages 18-24; victims of domestic violence or violent crimes that have occurred within the past 6 months; and persons in the second or third trimester of their pregnancy. Documentation is required to confirm each household's eligibility status.

Season of Sharing assists with delinquent rent or mortgage payments and will also assist with utility payments, where utilities (electricity, gas or water) are under threat of shut-off or have already been shut off. In addition, SOS addresses critical family needs by providing limited assistance with the cost of medical equipment and mobility aids that are deemed medically necessary and not covered by insurance. The application must include proof of all income and a budget form that is reviewed to assure that the applicant can meet their monthly financial obligations on an ongoing basis. Verification of amounts owed for rent, mortgage or utilities must also be provided. If rental assistance is requested, the application must include an IRS form W-9 establishing the landlord's ownership of the rental property.

Interested persons can begin the application process by calling an automated pre-screening line (510) 272-3700. Callers are asked to provide basic information and to answer a series of eligibility questions using their phone keypad. If the potential applicant meets basic program criteria for consideration, SOS intake staff contacts the applicant for additional screening.

However, it is easier to apply for Season of Sharing with the assistance of a "Community Partner Agency". Community Partner Agencies are community-based organizations whose caseworkers are trained to prepare and submit Season of Sharing applications. For more information about Season of Sharing, including a list of Community Partner Agencies, please visit the [Season of Sharing website](#). The AIDS Housing Information Project (AHIP) at Eden I&R is a Community Partner Agency and will assist PLWH in assembling and submitting applications for SOS move-in assistance.

Inquiries from staff of agencies interested in becoming a Season of Sharing community partner may be sent to sos@acgov.org. Only agencies that have completed a mandatory orientation may submit applications on behalf of their clients.

Keep Oakland Housed (KOH): Established in 2018, Keep Oakland Housed is a partnership consisting of Catholic Charities East Bay, Bay Area Community Services (BACS), and the East Community Law Center. KOH is funded by Kaiser Permanente, Crankstart and the San Francisco Foundation. Keep Oakland Housed provides a "three-prong emergency response approach" to help vulnerable Oakland residents remain in their homes: emergency financial assistance is provided by Catholic Charities East Bay, legal representation provided by East Bay Community Law Project, and supportive services to address barriers to remaining housed are provided by BACS.

KOH financial assistance is available to very low income Oakland residents (income at or below 50% of AMI) who are living under a lease or rental agreement and experiencing a housing crisis. Priority is given to households with extremely low income (30% of AMI). The program offers legal representation in unlawful detainer actions (eviction lawsuits) to households with income

at or below 50% of AMI. Bay Area Community Services (BACS) provides housing problem solving services, including flexible financial assistance, to persons who are unstably housed or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

To apply for emergency financial assistance, potential applicants should contact Catholic Charities East Bay (510 768-3100) and prepare the “Housing Crisis” documents that are needed to accompany an application, i.e., proof of identity, proof of income, a 3-day notice or copy of unlawful detainer filing, and a W-9 from the landlord.

CalWORKS Permanent Homeless Assistance: Families who receive CalWORKS benefits through the County Social Services Agency may be eligible for eviction prevention assistance through the CalWORKS Permanent Homeless Assistance program. This program assists eligible families with up to two months of back rent. Individuals who wish to request this assistance should contact their eligibility worker, visit a Social Services Agency office, or call the Customer Service Call Center at 510-263-2420 or 1-888-999-4772.

COVID renter and homeowner assistance: This funding was designed to provide one-time financial assistance to low income renters and homeowners impacted by COVID-19. Emergency Rental Assistance Programs (or ERAP) were established by Alameda County, the City of Oakland, and the City of Fremont.

Many of these programs have exhausted their funding or are over-subscribed. While additional funding may become available, the Alameda County Community Development Agency states that Emergency Rental Assistance Programs cannot guarantee rental assistance for households that applied after March 31, 2022; however, qualifying applications that were submitted before the application portal closed on May 13, 2022 will continue to be processed.

Please contact 2-1-1 for current information about the status of these programs and whether they are accepting applications.

Spectrum Community Services: This agency administers the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), a federally funded non-emergency financial assistance program that serves low-income households throughout Alameda County. The program focuses on households with high energy costs, and gives priority for assistance to seniors, disabled persons, and households with children under the age of 5. To qualify, the applicant’s gross annual income per the LIHEAP 2023 income limits must be below \$32,402.04 for a household of one, \$42,372.00 for a household of two, and \$52,341.96 for a household of three. (please see spectrumcs.org for an application and a complete income eligibility chart). LIHEAP is not an emergency assistance program, and Spectrum emphasizes that it may take 8-10 weeks for a payment to be processed.

In addition, Spectrum Community Services is now offering the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP), a COVID-relief program to help low-income households with a one-time payment toward the overdue water or sewage bill (or both water and sewage if they

appear on the same bill). Assistance is in the form of a direct payment to the participating water or wastewater service, and priority is given to households that are facing discontinuation of services. This program will end on August 15, 2023.