**Additional CT YHDP Homeless Verification Guidance**

**Youth must be currently homeless at time of program entry:**

Evidence must demonstrate that the participant was currently homeless at the time of entry into the YHDP program. HUD has indicated that if there is a delay between when documentation was initially gathered and when the participant **accepts** a vacant slot in the project, you must document homelessness during that period. For example, if your CAN documented someone is homeless and eligible for RRH on 9/1/16, and the person **accepts** an available RRH slot on 10/1/16, the documentation must be updated to reflect that the person was still currently homeless as of 10/1/16.

**Category 1 –Literal Homelessness:**

1. (first priority) Third party documentation, such as:

* HMIS or victim services provider database printed record; **OR**
* Written statement by housing or services provider such as homeless liaison, street outreach worker, or shelter provider; **OR**
* Oral statement by service provider documented by intake worker (if a written statement cannot be obtained) **OR**

2. (second priority) Intake worker direct observation recorded in the file; **OR**

3. (third priority) Certification of homelessness by youth AND documentation of intake worker’s attempts to verify information; **OR**

* If exiting institution –
* Discharge paperwork or a written or oral statement from staff of the institution with beginning and end dates of the time the youth spent in the institution (documenting was there for 90 days or less); **OR**
* Certification by youth that they exited institution **AND** documentation of intake worker’s attempts to verify information.
* **AND** documentation of shelter or place not meant for human habitation prior to entering institution.

**If youth is currently residing in Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing:**

If youth is currently residing in an Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing program that participates in HMIS, intake worker should use HMIS record of this current enrollment as third party documentation of homelessness.

**Written statement by “service provider”:**

HUD has indicated that who can be considered a “service provider” is broad and can include anyone who can give their professional judgment that this person was sleeping in a qualified location during the relevant period of time. This can include but is not limited to a housing, shelter, or outreach provider, a doctor, counselor, clergy person, law enforcement officer or representative of the school system. An intake worker may also accept as third-party documentation, the oral or written observation of someone in the community, including but not limited to, a shopkeeper, a building owner, or a neighborhood resident (regardless of relationship with the household). *Community members must have physically observed the place where the person is residing* ***AND*** *intake worker must use professional judgment regarding reliability*.

Documentation requirements are more flexible for housing/service providers. Providers may also document homelessness even if their encounter with the individual was in another setting (e.g., soup kitchen, drop-in center, doctor’s office).

Oral verification - If other third party documentation cannot be obtained, the intake worker may document their conversation with the service provider or community member verifying household is currently experiencing homelessness. This documentation of oral verification from a relevant third-party should be on the intake worker’s agency letterhead, should include the date on which the oral verification was made as well as the name and organization of the relevant third-party, whether the oral verification was provided over the phone or in-person, and the details of where (specific location) and when (specific date(s)) they witnessed the household’s homelessness. The intake worker should sign and date the documentation, certifying that all statements are true, accurate and complete.

**Intake Worker Direct Written Observation:**

If third-party documentation cannot be obtained, the intake worker should document their due diligence (page 2 of the YHDP homeless verification form) before moving to the second priority. If the intake worker did not physically observe the location in which the individual or head of household was residing, the written observation must clearly state why they believe, to the best of their knowledge and based on their professional judgment, that the individual or head of household was residing in a place not meant for human habitation or in a shelter, at the time of intake. The intake worker should sign and date the documentation on their agency’s letterhead, certifying that all statements are true, accurate and complete.

**Category 2 –Imminent Risk of Homelessness**:

• Documentation that youth will lose their housing within 14 days, which may include:

* Notice of eviction or equivalent legal document; **OR**
* Proof of inability to continue to pay for hotel or motel; **OR**
* Statement by youth that they cannot continue to stay at the place they have been; **AND** written or oral verification from owner or renter of housing obtained by intake worker **OR** if this third-party documentation cannot be obtained, then documentation of intake worker’s attempts to verify information;

• **AND** documentation that the youth has no *safe* alternative housing, no financial or other resources, and no family or other support network which can be self-certified by the youth. This can be self-certification.

**Category 2 Example:**

Helen is renting a hotel room, but cannot afford to pay for the room more than 13 days. Acceptable forms of third-party documentation would include a hotel bill and a record that the Helen paid the bill along with a record of her savings demonstrating that she cannot afford the expense for more than 13 days. The intake worker should explore potential natural supports with her, but if she is unable to be safely diverted, then the youth can self-certify using the certification form on page 3 of the YHDP homeless verification form that she has no *safe* alternative housing, no financial or other resources, and no family or other support network.

**Category 4 –Fleeing Violence**:

For providers that are not victim service providers:

• Statement by youth that they are fleeing because of violence, or other unsafe situations; **AND**

• If the safety of the youth is not jeopardized, verification of the statement through written observation by the intake worker or staff at other organizations including law enforcement, housing or service provider, social worker, homeless liaison or legal assistance provider youth has sought assistance from **OR** documentation of intake worker’s attempts to verify information and certification of the statement by the youth or intake worker; **AND**

• Youth’s self-certification that the youth has no safe alternative housing, no financial or other resources, and no family or other support networks. The intake worker should obtain any available documentation or statements supporting the youth’s certification.

For victim service providers:

• Statement by youth that they are fleeing domestic or other violence; **AND**

• Certification of the statement by the youth or intake worker; **AND**

• Youth’s self-certification that the youth has no safe alternative housing, no financial or other resources, and no family or other support networks. The intake worker should obtain any available documentation or statements supporting the youth’s certification.

**NOTE**: An intake worker should make *no attempt* to verify the unsafe situation if doing so would put the youth at any risk of harm –in these cases the self-certification and documentation in the due diligence chart on the form that verification would risk the youth’s safety is all the documentation needed.

Also when documenting for category 4, the intake worker needs to ask only enough questions to know what is going on –they should rely on the youth’s own statement about his or her feelings and concerns. If the youth indicates there is a safety risk then no further documentation of the safety risk is needed –the intake worker should simply document what the youth stated.