

State of Connecticut

“Moving On” Initiative



Policy and Procedure Guide

December 2019

Direct Questions to:

Kara Capobianco, DOH CAN Manager kara.capobianco@ct.gov

Leigh Shields-Church, DOH CAN Manager leigh.shields-church@ct.gov

Table of Contents

Section	Title	Page
I	Overview of Moving On Initiative	2
II	Initiative Participant Roles	2
III	Applicant Assessment	3
IV	Applicant Referrals to Dept. of Housing	4
V	Screening	4
VI	Receiving a Housing Offer	4
VII	Supportive Housing Unit Turnover	5
VIII	Participant Transition	5
IX	Applicant Withdrawal	5
X	Participant Program Termination	5
XI	Attachments	6
	A. Applicant Participation Agreement and Consent Form	6
	B. Moving On Assessment and Eligibility Determination	7
	C. Participant Withdrawal Form	8

I. Overview of Moving On Initiative

Supportive housing (SH) pairs affordable housing with housing based services that support people facing complex challenges to live with stability, autonomy, and dignity. Some tenants of supportive housing find that after some time they no longer need the same level of service that they once did. While tenants have the freedom to leave supportive housing whenever they wish, many cannot afford to move out on their own and may need assistance navigating the process of transitioning to independent housing. The State of Connecticut has constructed the Moving On Initiative to enable tenants of supportive housing who want to move to housing that is more independent to do so.

The Moving On Initiative assists tenants who are self-sufficient to move to subsidized housing without supports once they no longer need and want the supportive services provided where they currently live. Moving On prioritizes:

- Tenants with the longest lengths of stay in supportive housing, and
- Tenants of single site or congregate housing that is owned, managed, or master-leased by a service provider, and where services are provided on site.

The Moving On Initiative also seeks to create targeted turnover in areas of the state that have high unmet need for SH. Moving On subsidies will be allocated quarterly to areas of the state with the highest unmet need for SH to create turn over in the system. The “By Name List” will be the primary factor for determining allocation of subsidies to each Coordinated Access Network (CAN).

Tenants with stable housing histories and who no longer need the intensive support of supportive housing can choose to apply to access Tenant Based Housing Choice Vouchers or Mainstream Vouchers through John D’Amelia (JDA), administrator for the State of Connecticut Section 8 Program. DOH may add additional subsidy and housing types to this initiative in the future. Referring Supportive Housing Agencies (SHAs) include all Supportive Housing programs funded through the Department of Mental Health (DMHAS), Department of Housing (DOH) or Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in Connecticut. These programs work with referred Applicants through the application process (including locating and moving into an approved unit) and support tenants’ transition and connection to community based settings. SHAs will fill vacated units via the Coordinated Access Network system (CAN) with those persons experiencing homelessness who are prioritized for SH.

II. Initiative Participant Roles

Applicants/Participants –Applicants are supportive housing residents who are assessed to no longer need intensive support services and resources (including financial supports) associated with SH and have a desire to move to more independent housing, but are unable to move out of SH developments due to insufficient income to meet market rate rent. Once participants have moved on, they live independently in the community and establish relationships with mainstream community supports.

Supportive Housing Agencies (SHAs)— At least annually, SHAs assess a tenant’s interest and eligibility for Moving On using the Moving On Assessment Tool (Attachment B) and Moving On Consent Form (Attachment A). These annual assessments are important to quickly connecting the tenant to Moving On opportunities when they become available. If the tenant is identified on a Priority List for this initiative, SHA will submit all completed assessments and consent forms to DOH for

screening. Once applicants are accepted, the SHAs are responsible for assisting participants to access resources to enable them to move successfully. SHAs will support participants' transition and connection to community based settings, as well as provide up to 90 days of transition services to participants after they move. SHAs will accept a CAN referral to the unit vacated by the Moving On participant. SHAs will also participate in quarterly meetings facilitated by DMHAS to discuss Initiative progress.

Connecticut Department of Housing (DOH) DOH will accept completed Moving On Assessment Tools and Moving On Consent Forms from SHAs. DOH will submit completed referral packets to JDA and assist applicants in obtaining any necessary mitigation documentation. DOH and JDA will jointly manage referral lists based on date applicant was referred and length of time in the SH project that has agreed to participate in the Initiative. DOH will also manage the allocation of subsidies based on need in each CAN. For example, CANs with the highest unmet need for PSH will be allocated more Moving On subsidies to create turn over in the system. JDA will notify DOH when a voucher becomes available and DOH will match the next approved applicant(s) on the waiting list to the available subsidy. DOH is also responsible for tracking all assessment data and Initiative outcomes.

J. D'Amelia & Associates (JDA)—JDA will accept completed referrals from DOH and coordinate with DOH to obtain any necessary mitigation documentation. JDA and DOH will jointly manage referral lists based on date referred and length of time homeless in the referring program. JDA will notify DOH when subsidies become available for the project.

Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)—CSH provides technical assistance for Moving On, including consulting and assistance to the State, and support to other parties as needed at the request of the State.

III. Applicant Assessment

Using HMIS data, DMHAS and DOH will create a list to identify households based on the above prioritization criteria. DMHAS/DOH will provide SHAs with a list of the prioritized households in their programs to engage identified tenants and determine if tenants are interested in Moving On opportunities. SHAs must respond to DOH (returning the updated spreadsheet) with following outcomes for each tenant on the priority list:

- 1.) Not eligible due to acuity
- 2.) Not interested in applying
- 3.) Interested and eligible to apply
- 4.) Unable to contact

Exceptions to length of time prioritization may be made to create turn over in specific projects in which services are on site, based on community needs. SHAs will be able to identify tenants using the same eligibility requirements.

SHAs will announce Moving On to all tenants identified by DMHAS/DOH. SHAs are responsible for informing tenants in the cohort about the Initiative and eligibility requirements.

SHAs will review the goals and eligibility requirements of Moving On with tenants. If tenants are interested in applying, SHAs will review and obtain a signature on the Applicant Participation Agreement and Consent Form [Attachment A]. SHAs will maintain the confidentiality of tenants, as outlined in said SHA confidentiality policies and as authorized by applicants in the consent form. Applicants may request to see a copy of their Acuity Index Assessment Tool at any time.

SHAs will assess interested tenants for eligibility with the identified Moving On Assessment and Eligibility Determination [Attachment B]. The Acuity Index Assessment (for DMHAS funded programs) is to be completed by SHA staff and reviewed with the SH Supervisor. Each SHA will review and submit all completed Assessments and corresponding Consent Forms via upload into HMIS. The SHA will also work with CAN Housing Solutions Committee. The CAN Contact will complete the Smartsheet online referral form managed by DOH to document the CAN concurs with the Moving On referral and to notify DOH of the referral.

DOH will review all completed assessments and notify SHAs of qualified Applicants. To be eligible for the Initiative, Applicants must have an assessment of ideal on all areas of the acuity index (for applicable DMHAS funded programs) in addition to specific criteria outlined in Attachments A and B. Applicants will be given the opportunity to present evidence of mitigating circumstances and/or demonstrate that a reasonable accommodation that would be available to the tenant in private, non-supportive housing should be taken into account in the assessment. SHAs will notify DOH if a qualified Applicant's status changes between assessment and Moving On. Non-qualified applicants can request to be re-screened for eligibility after a minimum of 6 months.

IV. Applicant Referrals to JDA

SHAs will work with qualified applicants to complete the JDA Section 8 application packet. Completed referral packets must be uploaded into HMIS and notify DOH via e-mail when uploaded. DOH will review completed applications and notify SHAs of any missing documentation.

V. JDA Screening

At point of application, JDA will complete their screening process. In the event of the receipt of unfavorable information with respect to an Applicant, JDA will notify DOH and the Applicant, and permit the Applicant to show whether there are mitigating circumstances.

JDA will inform DOH once screening is complete and the Applicant has been approved and placed on waiting list(s) for Moving On.

VI. Applicant/Participant Withdrawal

Applicants can withdraw from the Initiative at any time prior to signing a new lease. Applicants can decide to reapply at any time and will not be penalized for their prior withdrawal. SHAs or DOH will assist the Applicant in completing a Withdrawal Form [Attachment C].

VII. Receiving a Housing Offer

JDA and DOH will maintain the referral list based on:

- 1.) Participant length of time in SH
- 2.) CAN SH is located in and

- 3.) Flag for priority SH project with services on site and
- 4.) Date referred to the Moving On Initiative.

When subsidies become available, JDA will notify DOH and DOH will notify the CANs and the SHAs.

VIII. Supportive Housing Unit Turnover

Vacancies created by supportive housing tenants moving on must be filled by a household experiencing homelessness and prioritized for SH by the local CAN. SHAs should submit vacancies to the CAN directly. These vacancies should be noted in the CAN as being a part of the Moving On initiative. DOH will also regularly track vacancies created by Moving On and confirm that the SHA has reported the vacancy to the CAN.

IX. Participant Transition

Participating SHAs are responsible for supporting participants' transition and connection to community based settings. SHA staff will assist the participant in acclimating to the new unit, which may include identifying resources for furnishings, acquiring utilities, identifying a moving company and obtaining personal items from storage.

Participating SHAs will work with the participant to understand their rental rights and responsibilities. Participating SHAs will ensure that utilities have been placed in the participant's name and turned on before a participant moves into the unit.

As the participant transitions into the community, the SHA will assist the participant in identifying community based supports. Such supports may include: mental health services, physical health services, substance use services, recreational activities, volunteer opportunities, public transportation options and grocery store locations. As needed, SHAs will assist the participant in community integration activities for 90 days after transition into the unit. This includes follow-up with tenants, regardless of need, no less than 30, 60, and 90 days post move-on.

X. Participant Rental Assistance Termination

JDA may terminate a participant from the Rental Assistance Program if the participant is no longer eligible for assistance or violates the policies of the Rental Assistance Program.

If the participant is terminated from the Housing Program, JDA will notify the DOH of the termination.

Attachment A

State of Connecticut Moving On Initiative – Applicant Participation Agreement and Consent

Thank you for your interest in the Moving On Initiative. The purpose of the Initiative is to assist residents of supportive housing to successfully move to an affordable apartment in the community. Participation in this Initiative is optional. This form gives you information about the Initiative. You will be asked to sign a copy of this consent form and will receive a copy of the form. Consenting to being screened for Moving On does not guarantee housing placement. By consenting to be screened for Moving On you agree to:

Allow your Supportive Housing Agency to share information with CT Department of Housing (DOH) to screen you for eligibility. Eligibility requirements include:

- You have retained housing for 36+ months and have had no housing court or landlord actions in the past year
- You (or your representative payee) have paid rent on-time every month in the last 12 months
- You have no rental arrears
- You have a documented source of stable income
- You no longer need the support services and resources offered in supportive housing to maintain stable tenancy
- You are a U. S. citizens *or* are a member of a specified category of non-citizen who has eligible immigration status

If you do not meet eligibility requirements, you have the opportunity to:

- Present evidence of mitigating circumstances that should be taken into account
- Request to be re-screened for eligibility after a minimum of 6 months

If you are screened eligible for the Moving On Initiative, you will be asked to:

- Complete application(s) for housing
- Consent to criminal background and credit checks
- Not move into a new unit until you have signed a lease with a landlord and have given adequate notice to your current landlord, if applicable
- Pay your portion of rent to your current landlord until you have fulfilled your lease
- Pay your portion of rent to your new landlord and *utility payment* once you have moved
- Respond to follow-up calls or visits from your Supportive Housing program during the initiative period (90 days)

By signing below, you understand that:

- You have the right to leave the Moving On Initiative at any time prior to signing a new lease
- If you move out of your current unit, you will not be able to return to that unit or receive ongoing services from your current supportive housing provider
- You have the right to ask for reasonable accommodations from Moving On at any time, including materials in large print and interpreter services
- You give permission to the following agencies to talk about your interest, application, and progress in the Initiative: CT Department of Housing, J. D'Amelia & Associates, CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

Participant Signature Date

Case Manager Signature Date

Participant Name (Printed)

Case Manager Name (Printed)

Attachment B

Connecticut Moving On Assessment and Eligibility Determination

Tenant Name: _____

Date: _____

To qualify for the “Moving On” program, Tenant must be able answer “Yes” to ALL the below statements:

Each applicant will be given the opportunity to present evidence of mitigating circumstances and/or demonstrate that a reasonable accommodation that would be available to Tenant in private, non-supportive housing should be taken into account in the assessment.

1. Housing

Tenant had no contacts with police and/or landlord regarding disruptive activities or unsafe conditions in the unit in last 12 months

Yes No

Tenant has no rent arrears

Yes No

Rep Payee/Tenant has paid rent on-time every month for the last 12 months

Yes No

2. Income

Tenant has had stable/consistent cash income for the last 7 or more months

Yes No

3. Independence/reliance on services:

Tenant has been in a supportive housing program and has held lease for over 36 consecutive months

Yes No

Tenant seeks out community supports and has many connections including specialized services

Yes No

Please attach the full completed Acuity Index forms for the two most recently completed assessments, for DMHAS funded programs.

Staff Member Signature

Date

Staff Member Name (Printed)

Agency

Attachment C

Connecticut Moving On Initiative Applicant Withdrawal Form

I, _____, would like to withdraw from the Moving On Initiative.

Please tell us why you withdrawing from the Initiative. You can choose more than one answer.

- a) I cannot find an apartment in the neighborhood I would like to live in.
- b) I am happy in my current housing.
- c) I can't afford cost associated with moving. Please list what cost: _____
- d) Other: _____

Did you seek housing outside your neighborhood?

- a) Yes
 - b) No
- If no, why? _____

Do you think you would be interested in the Initiative in the future?

- a) Yes
- b) No

If yes, what would you need? You can choose more than one answer.

- a) More housing options close to my current apartment
- b) Moving support, like a security deposit or furniture
- c) Build on my skills like cooking and getting around the neighborhood
- d) Increased income
- e) Less debt
- f) Other: _____

Current Supportive Housing Agency: _____

Case Manager Name: _____

Participant Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____