Documentation of Homelessness and Risk of Homelessness
Documentation of homelessness and risk of homelessness is **mandatory** for every program.

<u>Street Outreach, Emergency Shelter, TH, RRH, and PSH</u> programs serve people who are literally homeless, meaning they're staying or stayed in a shelter or a place not meant for human habitation.

<u>Prevention and CARR Team</u> programs serve people at imminent risk of literal homelessness. Document risk of homelessness with all three of the below elements.

⟨ Evidence that client must leave their current housing imminently (court-ordered or landlord-issued eviction notice, letter from host family or friend indicating the date by which the family must leave, or other documentation showing the household can no longer stay in their current residence) **AND**

⟨ Evidence that they have no alternative, safe, and appropriate housing (client self-certification) **AND**

⟨ Evidence that they have no other resources to obtain or maintain housing (client self-certification).

<u>CARR Team, DV, Choices Shelter, Choices TH/RRH, CFSH CE, and YHDP</u> programs serve people who are literally homeless **OR** are experiencing trauma or lack of safety related to, or fleeing , or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous, traumatic, or life-threatening conditions related to the violence against the individual or a family member in the individual's or family's current housing situation, including where the health and safety of children are jeopardized.

⟨ Literally homeless means they're staying in a Shelter or a place not meant for human habitation.

⟨ If someone is moving between Shelter, places not meant for habitation, family/friends, and unsafe/unstable situations, they can be considered literally homeless.

⟨ Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence means they are experiencing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions **AND** have no other residence **AND** lack resources or support to obtain other housing.

⟨ Violence includes trading sex for housing; trafficking; physical, emotional, technological, economic abuse; conflict that makes the youth unsafe; violence because of sexual orientation or gender identity; active drug use; gang or neighborhood violence directed to a youth at home; or other illegal activity putting the household at risk.

The easiest and clearest documentation of homelessness is the **HMIS or comparable database program history record.**

⟨ Enroll the client in your program and enter them into your program in HMIS or comparable database.

⟨ On the programs tab or similar section in a comparable database, look for an open Shelter or Outreach program immediately prior to the client's enrollment into your program.[1] Shelters can look for a Homeless Hotline/CPOA referral to your shelter on the programs tab.

⟨ Make sure the client was open in Shelter or Outreach (or has a Homeless Hotline referral for Shelter) within **7 days** prior to enrollment into your program.

⟨ Ensure the HMIS program history record or similar section in a comparable database is documented in the client record at the time of program enrollment.

Enrollment in CARR Team or CFSH CE is not documentation of literal homelessness because CARR Team or CFSH CE also serves youth or people at risk of homelessness. For CARR Team or CFSH CE clients, use the HMIS or comparable database program history record **AND** the Current Living Situation that CARR Team or CFSH CE entered in HMIS or comparable database. The current living situation must show literal homelessness for entry into a homeless program. Document both the program history and current living situation. If it does not show literal homelessness, use the guidance below.

For all homeless programs, if the client was not open in a Shelter or Outreach program within 7 days of enrollment into your program, you need additional documentation.

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[1] "Enrollment" means that the relevant coordinated point of access referred the client to your program and intake was processed.

- ⟨ If the client is unsheltered and you are an approved outreach services provider[2], complete the [Verification of Street Homelessness Form](#) to document observation of literal homelessness.
- ⟨ If the client is unsheltered and you are not an approved outreach services provider, ask an Outreach partner to complete the form.
- ⟨ If the client is working with another provider, ask them for written certification of homelessness.
- ⟨ If the client was in the hospital, jail/prison, or another institution for less than 90 days, ask the institution for written certification, including entry/exit dates and confirmation that the client was literally homeless when they entered.
- ⟨ Clients can self-certify homelessness for all program types. **Self-certification should be rare**. It may be more common for those fleeing violence, since it may be unsafe to obtain documentation. For RRH and PSH self-certification should be rare and used **as a last resort**, with documentation of attempts to get third-party documentation. Self-certification of homelessness can be used for up to 3 months of verification.
- ⟨ Maryhaven Engagement Center Safety program must re-verify and document homelessness if there's a break in shelter stays 7 days or more.

If a PSH or RRH program enrolls[1] a client and they leave Shelter before they're housed, they're still eligible for PSH or RRH, even if they are staying with friends/family or in a hotel/motel and if the client remains active in the program. Temporary housing situations before permanent housing should be limited. If temporary housing lasts more than 30 days, the provider needs to document the reasoning for the continued temporary living situation.

If you have an unusual situation and don't know how to document homelessness, please contact Twila Wellmaker (twellmaker@csb.org) and/or Kirstin Jones (kjones@csb.org).

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[2] [Approved Outreach providers](#) are Capital Crossroads Outreach, Huckleberry House Outreach/YOP Shop/CARR Team, LSS FM SSVF Outreach, Mount Carmel Outreach, Southeast PATH, VA Outreach, VOA SSVF Outreach, YMCA RRH/YHDP RRH, and HFF YHDP.