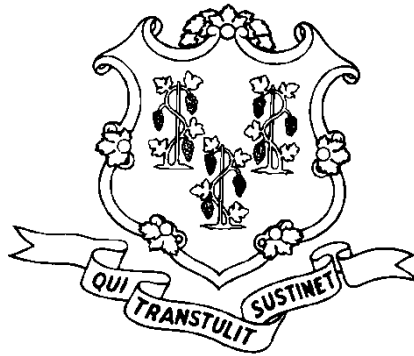


Department of Housing
Rental Assistance Program
And
Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program



Department of Housing
505 Hudson Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Pursuant to PA 13-234, the Department of Housing has the responsibility for administering the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) and the Housing Choice Voucher Section 8 Program (HCV). The requirements for this report are as follows:

PA 13-234, Section 69 (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2013*) Not later than January 1, 2014, and annually thereafter, the Commissioner of Housing, in consultation with the Commissioners of Social Services, Children and Families, Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Department of Developmental Services, shall submit a report, in accordance with the requirements of section 11-4a of the general statutes, on the number of departmental clients and the number who have been recipients of rental assistance certificates to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations, housing, human services and public health. Such report shall detail the utilization of the rental assistance vouchers issued pursuant to sections 17b-811a to 17b-815, inclusive, of the general statutes and establish targets to ensure that rental assistance program resources are allocated in accordance with legislative intent.

The following pages of this report will break out the RAP program and the HCV program with descriptions of the subsidy categories and the numbers served in each during state fiscal year 2015.

Department of Housing Rental Assistance Programs

Connecticut Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program

The Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV) is the federal government's largest program for assisting very low income families to afford decent, safe and sanitary housing in the private market. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) contracts with Public Housing Authorities (PHA) to administer the program. The State Department of Housing (DOH) is one of 40 PHA's in Connecticut that administers the HCV program and the only PHA that is empowered to administer the program throughout the entire State of Connecticut. The Department of Housing funds four categories of HCV Housing Choice Voucher Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program, Family Unification Program, Veteran's Affairs Supportive Housing and Project Based Vouchers.

Housing Choice Voucher Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program provides a portable rental assistance subsidy, which allows a tenant to move from one rental unit to another provided the unit meets program requirements. Participants that are issued a housing voucher are responsible for finding a suitable housing unit of the participant's choice where the owner agrees to rent under the program. Participants are able to select their own housing, including apartments, townhouses, and single-family homes. Rental units must meet minimum standards of quality and safety as established by HUD. Participants pay 30% of their adjusted gross income toward the rent and the DOH Housing Choice Voucher rental subsidy pays the remainder of the contract rent directly to the landlord.

Family Unification Program (FUP)

The Family Unification Program (FUP) is a partnership between DOH and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) that provides a Housing Choice Voucher from DOH and a comprehensive array of services from DCF to individuals and families involved in the child welfare system. HUD defines eligible participants as families for whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in the imminent placement of the family's child or children in out-of-home care, or in the delay of discharge of a child or children to the family from out-of-home care or as a young adult aged 18-21 who left foster care after the age of 16 and lacks adequate housing. DCF refers eligible participants to DOH for a Housing Choice Voucher and DCF provides intensive services to ensure the participants maintain stability in housing. Examples of services provided by DCF include money management skills, job preparation, educational counseling, proper nutrition and meal preparation.

Veteran's Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH)

The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program combines Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance for homeless Veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The VA provides these services for participating Veterans at the VA Medical Centers located in West Haven and Newington as well as in community-based outreach clinics located throughout the state. The HUD-VASH program is the prominent housing program aimed at ending veterans homelessness in Connecticut and nationally.

Project Based Vouchers

In contrast to a tenant based rental subsidy, in which a tenant can move from one eligible unit to another, the project based voucher program has the rental subsidy connected to a specific unit in a property.

Under the project based voucher program, the owner of a property reserves some or all of the units in a building for low-income tenants, and in return the program guarantees to make up the difference between the tenant's portion of the rent, defined as 30% of the participant's adjusted gross income, and the contract rent. A tenant who leaves a subsidized project will lose access to the project-based subsidy. To continue to receive rental assistance, these individuals either have to obtain a tenant-based voucher, or wait for another project based voucher unit to become vacant and available.

The chart below identifies individuals served in each program by month in state fiscal year 2015.

Section 8 Issued SFY15					
	<u>HCV</u>	<u>FUP</u>	<u>VASH</u>	<u>Project Based</u>	<u>Total</u>
Jul-14	97	0	4	0	101
Aug-14	26	0	3	0	29
Sep-14	75	0	6	0	81
Oct-14	11	0	1	1	13
Nov-14	8	0	2	0	10
Dec-14	12	0	5	1	18
Jan-15	22	0	8	0	30
Feb-15	35	0	6	0	41
Mar-15	28	0	3	0	31
Apr-15	23	0	4	0	27
May-15	67	0	5	0	72
Jun-15	25	0	12	0	37
Totals	429	0	59	2	490

Connecticut Rental Assistance Programs (RAP)

The State of Connecticut Department of Housing Rental Assistance Program (RAP) is the primary state-supported program for assisting very-low-income families to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Much like the federal Housing Choice Voucher program, RAP provides a portable rental assistance subsidy, which allows a tenant to move from one rental unit to another provided the unit meets program requirements. Participants that are issued a housing voucher are responsible for finding a suitable housing unit of the participant's choice where the owner agrees to rent under the program.

Participants are able to select their own housing, including apartments, townhouses, and single-family homes. Rental units must meet minimum standards of quality and safety as defined by the State of Connecticut, which has adopted the federal Housing Quality Standards (HQS) as established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Participants pay 40% of their adjusted gross income (or 30% of adjusted gross income if the participant is elderly or disabled) toward the rent and the DOH rental subsidy (RAP) pays the remainder of the contract rent directly to the landlord. Currently over 4000 households utilize RAP certificates throughout the state.

DOH adheres to the 2015 State of Connecticut Administrative Plan for the Rental Assistance Program. The administrative plan is mandated by State Regulations, Section 17b-812 and is updated annually by the DOH.

The State of Connecticut realizes that finding affordable housing for clients of other state agencies is important to their success. Without affordable housing, clients of the Departments of Children and Families, Developmental Disabilities, Mental Health and Addiction Services and Social Services may be placed in inappropriate higher cost living situations that do not benefit the clients or the state. As a result, the State of Connecticut has created eight specialized housing programs that utilize Rental Assistance Program certificates and are managed by DOH. DOH accounts for each type of RAP separately and allocates funding in accordance with legislative mandate. The partnerships and programs are listed below.

Department of Housing and Department of Children and Families Housing Collaborative

Family Reunification Program

The Family Reunification Program (FUP) builds off the success of the federally funded FUP program described in the previous section of this report. FUP is a collaboration between the DOH and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) designed to reduce the number of children in foster care by providing affordable housing through a rental subsidy and the necessary support services, including intensive case management and behavioral health services, to vulnerable and homeless families. The program serves families with mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence and other treatment needs. The DOH provides housing certificates through RAP to many of the families. The program currently serves more than 500 families annually and is credited with helping to reunify families whose children are in state care and to prevent the removal of children in circumstances where stable housing is a barrier.

Department of Housing and Department of Developmental Disabilities Housing Collaborative

In State Fiscal Year 2014, The Department of Developmental Disabilities (DDS) received 15 RAP certificates for use in covering the rental costs associated with transitioning individuals from 24 hour privately operated group homes to community based living settings. DDS currently supports over 1300 individuals in apartment-type settings throughout the state. Typically DDS has funded rental costs for individuals (in excess of their contribution) through a rental subsidy program managed internally. Starting in 2013 DDS has had the opportunity to utilize the RAP as a new resource as an alternative to prior practices.

DDS is committed to serving individuals in the least restrictive and most inclusive settings and believes it is their mission to support lifelong planning to assist individuals to be valued members of their communities. Common support services that individuals utilize to gain and maintain skills necessary to live independently include Individualized Home Supports (formerly Supported Living), Health Care Coordination, and Behavioral Management Supports, as well as additional support services. The residential support services provided to an individual in a community-based housing setting assist with the acquisition, improvement and /or retention of skills and provide necessary support to achieve personal outcomes that enhance an individual's ability to live in their community as specified in their Individual Plan. DDS has secured a Medicaid Waiver from the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid that will allow DDS to bill Medicaid for the services provided to these individuals.

Department of Housing and Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Housing Collaborative

Permanent Supportive Housing Initiative

The Permanent Supportive Housing Initiative is a collaborative effort between DOH and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to foster the development of long-term solutions to the housing and service needs of families and individuals, coping with psychiatric disabilities and/or chemical dependency that are facing homelessness. Preventing homelessness among this population is key and is achieved through the leasing of existing scattered site housing and the development of new housing units, both of which are subsidized with RAP certificates.

The goal of the Permanent Supportive Housing Initiative is the creation of affordable housing units within Connecticut that link individuals and families with targeted employment, housing based case management and support services. DMHAS funds community-based providers to work with eligible individuals to ensure that the formerly homeless individuals have the necessary skills to maintain housing stability. The Permanent Supportive Housing Initiative has provided over 1000 dwelling units in the leasing of scattered site apartments and has created over 1100 dwelling units through the development of housing.

In SFY 15, DOH and DMHAS issued a collaborative Request for Proposals (RFP). DOH had 110 RAPS available for the chronically homeless and DMHAS had matching service dollars available. By incentivizing leveraged funding, this RFP process was able to create an additional 176 units of permanent supportive housing statewide.

Department of Mental Health and Addiction Service Rental Assistance Program (DRAP)

In 2011, DMHAS created its own rental assistance program from existing state funding to assist clients in obtaining supportive housing. Specifically, 60 rental assistance certificates were allocated to the DMHAS forensics unit to allow individuals in the criminal justice system with a mental health diagnosis and who would be homeless upon release from prison live independently in the community. The rental subsidy provided the client with affordable housing and the DMHAS forensics unit provided the necessary clinical care and housing based case management services to allow these clients to successfully re-enter the community. An additional 50 rental assistance certificates were allocated to the Enhancing Housing Opportunities Program, which allowed tenants living in supportive housing that had achieved stability, to move into housing with less support services. With this transition open units in the supportive housing programs are able to assist new homeless individuals. These 110 rental certificates were transferred to DOH with its creation in 2013.

Housing First

In 2009, DMHAS in partnership with DOH launched the Housing First Program. This program offers permanent supportive housing through RAP certificates and supportive services to 20 individuals (10 in Hartford and 10 in New Haven) with serious mental illness who are being discharged from psychiatric hospitals, or who are homeless and at risk of hospitalization.

The primary goal of the program is to facilitate discharge of individuals with serious mental illness from psychiatric hospitals into permanent housing. A second aim of the program is to reduce the risk of hospitalization for individuals with serious mental illness living in homeless shelters. The Housing First program has made it possible for these individuals to transition to live independently in their community, rather than live in a restrictive and costly institutional setting. This approach benefits both the individuals involved and the state as a whole.

Connecticut Collaborative on Re-entry (formerly FUSE)

The Connecticut Collaborative on Re-entry (CCR) Program is a 100 unit permanent supportive housing program that identifies and assists individuals who cycle through the homeless service and corrections systems in the state's largest urban centers—Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, New London/Norwich and Waterbury. The Connecticut Department of Correction (DOC) and Judicial Branch's Court Support Services Division (CSSD), in partnership with DMHAS, DOH, the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), and the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH), provide technical assistance, staff support and financial assistance, including support services funding from DMHAS and RAP certificates from DOH, for this project. The DMHAS services funding provide the staffing capacity needed to ensure timely and effective case management as the newly-housed tenants stabilize and establish ties to treatment and other community resources. The case management services provide much-needed outreach and engagement services to facilitate the successful transition from the shelters and/or jails/prisons to community living. In addition, given the critical role of income and employment for recovery and quality of life, a particular focus of this program is on the employment/income outcomes for all participants.

RAP VASH

In February 2014, Governor Dannel Malloy announced in his State of the State address that Connecticut would effectively end veteran homelessness by the end of 2015. To assist with this effort Governor Malloy made available 50 state Rental Assistance Program (RAP) certificates to veterans ineligible for VA healthcare with high case management needs. These rental subsidies are partnered with case management services from community providers funded through the state's federal Cooperative Agreement to Benefit Homeless Individuals (CABHI) grant, administered through DMHAS.

Department of Housing and Department of Social Services Housing Collaborative

Money Follows the Person (MFP)

Money Follows the Person (MFP) is a Federal Demonstration program funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services designed to help states rebalance their long-term care systems by assisting individuals to transition from living in institutional settings to community living. The program provides service funding for elderly and disabled individuals, including those with mental health disorders or developmental disabilities to live independently in the community. To be eligible a person must (1) have been institutionalized for at least six months and (2) meet Medicaid eligibility criteria. In addition, it cannot cost more to care for the person in the community than in an institution. The appropriate state agency (Department of Developmental Disabilities for individuals with developmental disabilities, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services for individuals with mental health disorders and Department of Social Services for the elderly) has case workers that assess the service needs and develop a care plan for the individual, as well as assist the individual with locating housing and services in the community. DOH provides a RAP certificate to the eligible participant to ensure that the individual has access to affordable, safe, decent and sanitary housing. Currently, DOH provides over 600 RAP certificates to MFP eligible individuals and it is expected that this number will continue to rise in the coming years.

Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF), a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), combines public and private resources to grow promising community-based solutions that have evidence of results in any of three priority areas: economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development. AIDS CT (ACT), in collaboration with the Partnership for Strong Communities has been awarded a SIF grant to fund innovative solutions that link supportive housing and healthcare. The funded

project, *Connecticut Integrated Healthcare & Housing Neighborhoods*, is one of four pilot programs selected to participate in a national effort to demonstrate that the integration of housing, care management and health services is effective in improving health outcomes for the vulnerable men and women caught in a revolving door of hospitals, emergency rooms, detox and other crisis health services.

Connecticut Integrated Healthcare & Housing Neighborhoods will house and provide patient-centered health care to 160 individuals in an effort to integrate housing, care management and health care to the improve health of individuals while lowering public costs. Housing will be supported by DOH RAP certificates and will be located in the Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven and New London metropolitan areas. This multi-year pilot is a healthy-home outreach model using assertive outreach and care coordination to link high-cost, high-need clients with primary care, behavioral healthcare and supportive/affordable housing. The overall project aims to identify and target Medicaid-enrolled high users of health services who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and who have chronic medical conditions, including serious mental illness, substance abuse disorders or other chronic medical conditions.

The chart below identifies individuals served in each program by month in state fiscal year 2015.

RAP Issued SFY15											
	<u>Permanent Supportive Housing</u>	<u>FUP</u>	<u>SIF/ACT</u>	<u>DRAP</u>	<u>RAP VASH</u>	<u>MFP</u>	<u>Housing 1st</u>	<u>CCR</u>	<u>DDS</u>	<u>RAP</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Jul-14	8	0	0	1	0	51	0	0	0	12	72
Aug-14	1	19	11	5	0	38	0	1	0	32	107
Sep-14	10	0	1	0	0	35	0	1	0	9	56
Oct-14	5	0	5	3	0	61	0	0	0	19	93
Nov-14	2	0	1	4	0	41	0	0	0	17	65
Dec-14	1	2	9	4	1	63	0	1	0	3	84
Jan-15	5	0	12	3	0	41	0	0	0	18	79
Feb-15	7	0	0	1	0	26	0	0	0	4	38
Mar-15	16	0	4	1	0	46	0	0	0	25	92
Apr-15	15	0	7	3	0	60	0	0	0	2	87
May-15	15	0	0	0	0	58	0	0	0	6	79
Jun-15	9	0	3	6	12	60	0	0	0	0	90
Totals	94	21	53	31	13	580	0	3	0	147	942

The rental subsidy programs administered by DOH are an effective tool for providing safe, sanitary and decent housing for low income individuals throughout the state. In addition, the State Rental Assistance Program (RAP) has proven to be one of the most effective programs for reducing homelessness and for providing community-based living in Connecticut. As a result of these programs, over 10,000 state residents have been assisted in locating an affordable living situation. DOH intends to continue to administer these programs in an efficient manner to be able to provide access to affordable housing to as many low income individuals as possible.