



## SUPPORTIVE HOUSING VACANCY & REFERRALS NETWORKSHOP Q&A

### Office of Supportive and Affordable Housing (OSAHS)

#### Shelter Communication

**Q:** Can providers speak directly to the shelter once a referral has been made?

**A:** Yes, the provider may contact the shelter directly after an applicant has been accepted to the unit. Typically, communication has always gone through HRA OSAHS. On lease-ups, that should remain the case. On re-rentals, housing providers can reach out to shelter directly to work with clients on document collection. If you have been working with a vacancy/placement specialist in HRA OSAHS, please keep them in the loop.

**Q:** What happens if a person is referred by one shelter but then moved to a different shelter? Is there any way to give priority to someone that has been waiting a long time (6months+)?

**A:** HRA can now see in CAPS where the person is located if the shelter has changed. If they are going to be making a referral, they will know to reach out to the current shelter and give them a copy of the manifest or the interview request. The new shelter would also have access to any active supportive housing applications in CAPS. There should not be an impact on the client.

#### Virtual Interviews

**Q:** Can we end virtual interviews? Social workers set aside several hours for each unit and then no one shows up. This takes away time from serving clients.

**A:** The City is continuing with virtual interviews because shelters are understaffed and it is not logistically feasible to escort the client to the interview. However, HRA will allow an in-person interview if you are going to do a clinical, property management, and unit showing in one.

#### Request a Referral Form

**Q:** If I have to contact my Vacancy Control Specialist do I still have to submit the Request a Referral form or just send the "standard" email request?

**A:** For SRO units, no need to submit the Request a Referral form; just send the standard email request to your vacancy specialist.

**Q:** If providers accept referrals from other referral sources for NY/NYI and NY/NYII how does this fit into this process?

**A:** If you currently get referrals from other sources, you may continue to do so.

**Q:** What if there are multiple eligibility requirements for a unit [in filling out the Request a Referral Form]?

**A:** Refer to the [Supportive Housing Provider Referral Guide](#) to ensure that you indeed need to fill out the Request a Referral Form. (For example, if you have multiple requirements from HRA SRO Support Services and NY/NY I, you do not need to fill out the form and should go to your Vacancy Control



Specialist). Once confirmed that the Request a Referral Form is the correct avenue, in the additional comments section at the end of the form, list the other contractual eligibility criteria that needs to be considered. Please only include contractual criteria, not organizational preferences.

### **Move-In Readiness**

**Q:** Even though we have a vacancy, the unit is not move-in ready. Does the request for referral happens once the unit is ready?

**A:** The unit should be ready to at least show and very close to being move-in ready before requesting a referral. HRA would like to decrease the time between acceptance and move-in.

### **Client Privacy**

**Q:** Does OSAHS have an encryption software/platform for emailing required documents?

**A:** The CAPS system fully protects private client data. Client applications are downloaded directly from CAPS, rather than emailed. In addition, OSAHS, the shelter and the housing provider can upload sensitive client documents directly into CAPS. The manifest is still being sent via email, although ultimately interview scheduling will happen in CAPS. If you have specific concerns about privacy in regards to the manifest, HRA can work with you.

### **Timing**

**Q:** What is being done to address the major vacancy referral delays, and shorten the time lag between referral, scheduling interviews, gathering documents, and move-in?

**Q:** Can HRA provide us with a interview timeframe?

**Q:** Since we have not begun requesting referrals through CAPS yet, and are still using the “standard email request,” will there be data on the length of time between when a manifest is initially requested and when a client is identified/accepted?

**A:** HRA is catching up and it will take some time. As the number of new supportive housing units grows, so does the demand for re-rentals. Currently there is no separate unit that responds to re-rentals (versus lease-ups) and HRA is currently attempting to set that up. Once the scheduling function is programmed in CAPS, HRA will have data on length of process from referral request to identifying client for the unit. For now, if you are using the Request a Referral form, you should get confirmation in 24-48 hours. HRA is working to schedule interviews as rapidly as possible. Given the backlog, they expect new interview requests to be scheduled 10-15 business days from the date of the request. As they work to streamline this process and reduce the backlog, they expect turnaround times from request to interview to decrease.

### **Client Transfer Requests**

**Q:** I have a client who wants to swap SRO locations. What is the process for doing so and what documents are needed for the process?

**A:** For client transfers, contact your contracting agency first. They will guide you through the process.

### **Limited Eligibility Pools**

**Q:** What can be done when we have limited pools of eligible families and individuals for SH programs/projects?



**A:** Coordinating and collaborating with referral sources (shelters, hospitals, street outreach, etc.) ahead of a building opening can be beneficial in identifying eligible applicants in advance.

### **Determination Letters**

**Q:** Our determination letter states Level II and the application states Community Care. Can someone be appropriate for both Community Care and Level II housing at the same time?

**A:** The eligibility letter will state all housing options that are available to the individual. If you have concerns about the eligibility on the determination letter, contact the reviewer, whose name and contact information is on the letter.

### **CAS Questions**

#### **TAD (Turn around Document) Report**

**Q:** If you have a pending referral, but you need to submit the monthly TAD but can't due to a pending TAD, do you still need to update the referral although nothing has changed?

**A:** Yes, the referral must be updated in order to submit the TAD.

#### **Changing Vacant Unit Status in CAPS**

**Q:** If you had a vacant unit that has since been filled, how should you go about changing the vacant unit status in CAPS?

**A:** The only way to change a unit status from Vacant to Occupied is to move the client in. You can move the client in directly from the referral roster, or you can move the client into the unit in the tenant roster.

#### **Vital Documents**

**Q:** One of our biggest challenges is getting the documents we need to verify eligibility for rental subsidy. Is there a plan to centralize applicant documents?

**A:** At this time, shelters and housing providers as well as the placement entity can upload client documents to CAPS.

**Q:** Are there ways within CAPS to filter candidates based on which vital documents they have available?

**A:** When you are completing the survey, client information gets matched to the HRA repository, which is a database that HRA maintains. That function is programmed to return copies of the client's social security card, photo ID of any kind, income documentation of any kind, birth certificates or other identity documents. The referring agencies will know right up front how prepared the clients are. If there are missing documents, the referring agencies can work with clients to obtain them. However, there is no current function on the housing provider side to filter by availability of vital documents.

#### **Scattered Site Programs**

**Q:** How does the CAPS system help scattered site housing providers?

**A:** The majority of City-funded and some state-funded scattered site programs are in CAPS. All NY/NYIII and NYC 15/15 scattered site units are in CAPS.



### **Real Time Vacancy Data**

**Q:** Does your systems tell you in real time how many vacancies there are?

**A:** As long as housing providers are reporting their vacancies in real time, yes, CAPS shows real time vacancies for each program.

### **Individual Questions**

**Q:** In CAPS, there aren't options for many of the results and when you update, the application disappears. Can this be addressed?

**A:** Please reach out to the CAPS team with specific comments, we would appreciate hearing your ideas for improvements. Yes, after you close a referral it disappears in the system.

### **CUCS/OMH Questions**

#### **Central Intake for OMH**

**Q:** For OMH supportive housing, we have a central intake which usually funnels referrals through, slowly. Would it be better served for the program to complete the referral form and then would we be individually required to complete the TAD?

**A:** For OMH, complete the Request for Referral Form when you are seeking housing applications for a NY/NYIII Pop A vacant unit; contact CUCS for other housing vacancies. You also need to complete and submit the Turn Around Document (TAD) if your housing is funded under the NY/NYIII Agreement since HRA was designated to monitor the implementation of the NY/NY III Agreement. In addition, if you are funded under OMH, all admissions and discharges need to be entered into the CAIRS system. Reach out to OMH if in doubt of the reporting requirements.

#### **ESSHI in CAPS?**

**Q:** Should ESSHI tenants be incorporated into CAPS?

**A:** Please contact your ESSHI contracting agency. Any agency with an operating contract from OMH for ESSHI units should contact OMH prior to opening. OMH will work with you to determine which placement entity will be involved with rent up. Depending upon the source of the capital, it could be HRA/OSAHS or CUCS. OMH will also coordinate a call with HRA to set up CAPS for those units which will receive referrals from HRA/OSAHS and CUCS.

#### **CUCS Vacancy Update**

**Q:** CUCS: all of our units are either SRO subsidy or NY/NY Pop A/F or HRA 15/15. Is there any reason that we should have our contact info listed on the CUCS vacancy list? If not, how can we get our removed?

**A:** OMH funded units should be listed in CUCS' Vacancy Update. If you have only NY/NY I and II units that have dedicated referral streams that are mandatory, you do not have to list your vacancies in the CUCS Vacancy Update. The CUCS Vacancy Update is a DOHMH funded publication. If you are unsure, you can reach out to your DOHMH contract specialist. You can email [housinginfo@cucs.org](mailto:housinginfo@cucs.org) and request for your program to be removed if needed.



### **Child and Adolescent Referrals**

**Q:** Are there any plans to link referrals for the Child and Adolescent Community Residences to CAPS at any point? Right now referrals for these programs go through CSPOA.

**A:** No. CSPOA is separate and there are no plans to merge the two.

### **HASA Questions**

#### **HASA Referral Process**

**Q:** We have a housing specialist at HASA for referrals, are we to send them the referral form? Also we have one program using HASA WEB not CAPS.

**A:** No, continue to contact HASA the same way you usually do. HASA programs that are NOT NY/NY are in HASA Web, not CAPS.

**Q:** Will HASA start using CAPS?

**A:** HASA not currently in CAPS. The goal is to incorporate HASA into CAPS in the future.

### **Other**

#### **HUD Contracted Programs**

**Q:** If we are contracted with HUD, do we continue to send all applications to CUCS? HUD is our only service contract.

**A:** As noted in [the NYC Supportive Housing Provider Referral Guide](#), you may source your own referrals consistent with your HUD contract.

### **Additional Resources**

[Click here](#) to see the referral guide.

[Click here](#) to see HRA's presentation.

[Click here](#) to watch a CAPS Overview and 2010e training.