



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Community Services Housing Division
Housing Assistance Unit
www.commerce.wa.gov/CHG

CHG Communications # 27

Please forward to your sub grantees and contact your CHG program manager if you have any questions.

CHG Updates **Revised CHG Guidelines and an FAQ are published.** Contact your CHG Program Manager at Commerce if you didn't receive these documents. (They are not on our website yet due to technical difficulties.)

Here is a [link](#) to the **CHG Guidelines Webinar** from January 6.
Watch and learn!

Vote for your training needs!

Help us prioritize training opportunities for you in the new year. [Take this survey](#) (forward to other staff) and help us prioritize training opportunities.

Save the Dates for CHG Grant and Guideline Training

- **CHG Administrators 2 Day Training for Lead Grantee staff – by invitation only**
Monday February 29, 1 – 4:30 pm, continued Tuesday March 1, 8:30 – 3:30 pm
- **CHG Direct Service Staff Training – registration link will be sent the first of February**
Wednesday March 2, 8:30 – 3:30 pm
OR
- **CHG Direct Service Staff Training (repeated) – registration link will be sent the first of February**
Thursday March 3, 8:30 – 3:30 pm

2016 FMR

HUD has published the final [2016 Fair Market Rents](#). Be sure to use the new FMR's in your community.

CHG Myth Buster

Utility Only Assistance – who is this for?

Myth: If a person has a *late notice* or *shut off* for utilities, we have to help them because living in a house without electricity or water means they are living in a place not meant for human habitation and are homeless.

Fact: Just because a person doesn't have working utilities in their unit, does not mean they are homeless.

If a person asks for utility assistance, you still need to determine and document housing status and income. You must also complete the Utility Only Assistance and Targeted Prevention Forms.

Housing Status / Guidelines 4.1.2

Households are at imminent risk of homelessness if they will lose their primary nighttime residence within 14 days of the date of application for assistance, AND no subsequent residence has been identified, AND the household lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing. You must document using the **CHG Verification of Household Eligibility and Income Form**.

Income Eligibility / Guidelines 4.3

The combined household income must not exceed 30 percent of area median income as defined by HUD. Income limits are based on Area Median Income (AMI) which can be located for each county at: www.huduser.gov (Data Sets, Income Limits). You must document using the **CHG Verification of Household Eligibility and Income Form**.

Targeted Prevention / Guidelines 7.5

Lead/subgrantees that provide targeted prevention must prioritize households most likely to become homeless, using the **CHG Targeted Prevention Eligibility Screening Form**.

Utility Only Assistance / Guidelines 5.3.2

Utility-only assistance (including arrears) can be provided when no other utility assistance, such as LIHEAP, is available to prevent a shut-off, and documented using the **Utility-Only Assistance Form**.

This may seem like a lot of work to determine the right intervention and a lot of paperwork just to pay someone's utility bills. **And you are right because it is.** We need to carefully and thoroughly document why we are using state homeless funding to pay for utilities. We all need to protect and preserve this funding and ensure it goes to the people who are homeless and with the greatest need. This funding should not be used to fill gaps for people in poverty or to fill in the safety net of other systems of care.

Homeowners are not eligible for Utility Only Assistance.

Point in Time Updates

Point in Time Count

The Point in Time Count is coming up on January 28th

Commerce is holding two webinars to show HMIS users how to enter PIT surveys into HMIS. Below are the links. Please contact [Matt Mazur-Hart](#), 360-725-2926, with any questions about the Count.

[January 26th – 10:00 – 11:30.](#)

[February 1st – 2:00 – 3:30.](#)

HMIS Software Update

HMIS Software Update:

1. Balance of State, King and Yakima HMIS Admins will be learning the new system in mid-January and setting up all your programs on the new system shortly thereafter
2. Legacy data will be migrated from Adsystem to Clarity going back as far as calendar year 2012.
3. HMIS trainings on the Clarity software will occur sometime in late February/early March in various forms: webinars, videos, in person opportunities, etc.
4. The Adsystem HMIS goes away mid-March.

Commerce is hosting check-in calls twice a month to go over any new developments as we get closer to the move to our new software. Please email mary.schwartz@commerce.wa.gov if you didn't receive the calendar appointments for these calls.

Help us learn!

Have you heard of Diversion as a strategy for housing homeless families? Please take this brief survey to help us learn more about the needs of families in your county.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7GC9PZJ>