



# Housing Assistance Program

## *Program Description*

The Housing Assistance Program of YAP Adult Services helps homeless individuals and families find safe and affordable permanent housing. In addition, YAP Adult Services works to improve participants' life skills, education, employment readiness, and health needs so that they will be better able to support themselves after being successfully discharged from the Housing Assistance Program.

## *Program Elements*

It is impossible to address the challenges presented by homelessness successfully unless they are approached in a holistic manner. YAP Adult Services does so by addressing immediate needs as well as short-term and long-term challenges:

- **Housing Subsidies and Flexible funds:** Each family is eligible to receive up to \$800/month for up to 6 months, as determined by their individual circumstances, to help secure and sustain permanent housing in the community. These subsidies can be used for rent and security deposits. In addition, a flexible fund is established to assist with expenses such as clothing for job interviews and travel to work. Access to the flexible fund is by application and adaptable to specific needs and life circumstances. Flexible funds are capped at amounts specified in contractual agreements with referring agencies. To ensure that participants make optimal use of flexible fund allocations, YAP staff guide spending decisions and help locate “best values” for needed goods and services.
- **Housing Advocacy Services:** Each participant receives an average of 5 hours of services weekly for 6 months. These services focus on reducing the likelihood of future homelessness by meeting specific needs and interests of each participant. Housing Advocates, specially trained staff recruited from the family's community, utilize their local knowledge and community relationships in partnership with the family and their existing supports, to implement an individualized plan. Housing Advocates also mobilize a family team that will support referred families in securing and maintaining permanent housing during and after program involvement.
- **Crisis Planning/Intervention Services:** The Advocate works with the individual/family and the Program Director to develop individualized crisis plan that addresses risk factors associated with homelessness, such as family conflict, job performance, substance or alcohol usage, etc. Advocate staff are available 24/7, including weekends, to implement plans and address crisis situations when they arise.
- **Community Partnerships:** YAP works in concert with community resources (churches, local and state police, the state Division of Parole, substance abuse and mental health treatment providers, housing providers, home health care, job coaches and others as appropriate) to address unmet needs of the homeless population at both individual and community levels.
- **Unconditional Commitment to Care:** The Housing Assistant Program has a “no reject, no eject” referral and service delivery policy: We don't give up on participants despite challenges that arise, and we do whatever it takes to build their success.

