



## **CONTRA COSTA MENTAL HEALTH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT - MHSA**

### **MHSA Housing Program – Assignment Agreement June 12, 2008**

#### **Overview:**

The MHSA Housing Program provides funds for California counties to build and operate permanent supportive housing for members of the MHSA target population who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and low income. Each County Mental Health Department has received an allocation of funds for this specific purpose. Contra Costa Mental Health's allocation is \$9,130,800. At this point in time this is a one-time allocation; any additional future funds are dependent upon actions by the State Department of Mental Health (DMH). In order to access these funds Counties must assign the dollars to the California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA) who will then administer the funds.

#### **Role of CalHFA in the MHSA Housing Program:**

The State Department of Mental Health has entered into an agreement with the California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA) that authorizes CalHFA to administer these funds on a statewide basis. In order for the Contra Costa County to have access to these funds, an Assignment Agreement must be executed, which allows the funds to be transferred from DMH to CalHFA. CalHFA will then hold, administer and invest the funds on behalf of the County. The County may then access the funds through submission and approval of an MHSA Housing Program Application.

If the Assignment Agreement is not executed, the County will lose the funds. The funds may be used only for the MHSA Housing Program; the county may not use these funds for any other MHSA or non-MHSA purpose.

#### **Local Planning in Contra Costa:**

Contra Costa Mental Health (CCMH) has successfully developed new permanent supportive housing with MHSA funds through one-time funds available from Community Services & Supports dollars. In 2006 CCMH began partnering with the County's Department of Conservation and Development, Redevelopment Division (DCD), and successfully awarded \$1.6 million in MHSA funds to

community-based housing developers. Continuing this successful partnership, CCMH and DCD are now jointly implementing the MHSA Housing Program. In February and March 2008 CCMH conducted surveys of mental health consumers, family members and providers for input into local planning and presented the findings at the March 27<sup>th</sup> Mental Health Commission meeting. In April 2008 a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) was issued. CCMH and DCD conducted a Technical Assistance meeting for potential developers and service providers on April 24<sup>th</sup>. Details of this activity is posted here:

[http://www.cchealth.org/groups/mental\\_health/mhsa/housing\\_program.php](http://www.cchealth.org/groups/mental_health/mhsa/housing_program.php)

**Assignment Letter:**

The Assignment Agreement is considered an update to Contra Costa County's existing CSS Three-Year Program and Expenditure Plan. As an update to the CSS plan, the Agreement is subject to the California Code of Regulations and therefore must be posted for a 30-day public comment period prior to approval by the Board of Supervisors.

Public comments will be accepted through July 14, 2008. Comments must be made in writing and sent to:

MHSA Housing Program  
Contra Costa Mental Health Administration  
1340 Arnold Drive, Suite 200  
Martinez, CA 94553

**Reference:**

[DMH Info Notice 08-08](#)

[http://www.dmh.cahwnet.gov/DMHDocs/docs/notices08/08-11\\_Enclosure\\_1.pdf](http://www.dmh.cahwnet.gov/DMHDocs/docs/notices08/08-11_Enclosure_1.pdf)

[DMH – MHSA Housing Program Information](#)

[Contra Costa MHSA Web Page](#)

[http://www.cchealth.org/groups/mental\\_health/mhsa/housing\\_program.php](http://www.cchealth.org/groups/mental_health/mhsa/housing_program.php)

[http://www.dmh.cahwnet.gov/Prop\\_63/MHSA/Housing/docs/MHSA\\_HP\\_TermSheet\\_08Apr08.pdf](http://www.dmh.cahwnet.gov/Prop_63/MHSA/Housing/docs/MHSA_HP_TermSheet_08Apr08.pdf)

**Attachments:**

Overview of Contra Costa MHSA Housing Program Planning.  
Assignment letter



## CONTRA COSTA MENTAL HEALTH MHSA HOUSING PROGRAM

### STAKEHOLDER INPUT PROCESS – MARCH 2008 SUMMARY RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to identify local priorities related to the use of housing funds available through the Mental Health Services Act, Contra Costa County conducted a stakeholder input process. This process consisted of focus groups with mental health consumers, family members and service providers and a written survey that was completed by 300 consumers and family members. Based on an analysis of the results of the focus groups and surveys, the following priorities have been identified:



- **Applications for both shared housing and rental housing should be accepted; however rental housing should be prioritized over shared housing.** – 79% of consumers indicated in the written survey a preference for private apartments over shared housing. This sentiment was also echoed in the focus groups. As there are some people who are interested in and could benefit from shared housing however such housing should not be precluded.
- **Maintain rents at the lowest possible level** – For those who completed the survey and are currently housed, the reasons cited for being at risk of becoming homeless were most commonly financial. Rents should be kept at the lowest level possible within the range allowed by the MHSA Housing Program guidelines.
- **Provide a range of unit sizes to accommodate different size households.** – 34% of survey respondents indicated a need for a unit larger than a one-bedroom in order to accommodate minor or adult children or a live-in caregiver. 42% of respondents reported having a family size that was three persons or more. The need for studios and one-bedroom apartments is greater than for larger units, however the need for larger units is significant enough to warrant creating some larger sized units if feasible. Focus group participants also indicated a preference for one-bedroom units while stressing the importance of providing a range of unit sizes.
- **Where feasible, create one-bedroom units rather than studio apartments.** – In both the survey and focus groups, consumers expressed a strong preference for one-bedroom apartments over studios, including a willingness to pay more for a one-bedroom apartment. While cost constraints and other logistical factors may require the creation of studio apartments, whenever feasible, the option of creating one-bedroom units should be considered.

- **Prioritize mixed housing over housing for mental health consumers only but allow for consumer dedicated housing as well.** – Consumer survey responses indicated a preference for mixed housing. Additionally, all three focus groups stated a strong preference for mixed housing in part to overcome issues of stigma and discrimination. A significant number of consumers (45%), however, expressed a preference for consumer dedicated housing. Ideally both mixed and dedicated housing will be created, although it is understood that the housing mix will largely be determined by the availability of various funding sources and fair housing requirements..
- **Locate housing close to public transportation.** – During all three focus groups, proximity to public transportation, and BART in particular, was named as a key component when determining the best location for new housing. Survey respondents also indicated a slight preference for having public transportation nearby over other location related options.
- **Design housing to include extra safety features and adequate common space** – Survey results showed that safety and security is the number one concern for consumers and family members when considering various design options. Developers should strive to incorporate additional safety features whenever feasible. Adequate common space was identified as a priority by all three focus groups.
- **Provide a range of different types of services, located on-site when feasible and including on-call staff for emergencies outside of regular business hours.** – A priority expressed in particular by the families and service providers is ensuring that a range of services be available to address the varying needs of residents. Survey respondents indicated a preference for having service staff on site as well as available outside of regular business hours for emergencies.
- **Locate MHSA Housing units at locations throughout the County, in particular Central County** – Focus group participants expressed that it would be beneficial to locate housing sites throughout the County so that consumers could stay in proximity to their existing support systems. Survey respondents indicated a slight preference for Central County.

**Assignment Agreement**

MHSA Housing Program  
Contra Costa County

Contra Costa County (the County) agrees to participate in the state-administered Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Housing Program funded from the Community Services and Support Component of the MHSA. The MHSA Housing Program will be jointly administered by the Department of Mental Health (DMH) in conjunction with the California Housing and Finance Agency (CalHFA).

The County agrees that upon its approval of this Assignment, the State Fiscal Year 2007/08 Planning Estimate in the amount of \$9,130,800 specified for the MHSA Housing Program will be transferred by DMH on behalf of the County to CalHFA. Specifically, funds in the amount specified will be transferred from the Mental Health Services Fund to the State Operations portion of the DMH state budget, item 4440-001-0001 Program 10, State Operations. DMH will then transfer these funds to CalHFA for support of the MHSA Housing program.

CalHFA will hold the funds transferred in a county specific sub-account, invest the funds in an appropriate investment vehicle as determined by CalHFA, and credit the county sub-account with interest received on the investment. The County (and the project sponsor, if applicable) may access MHSA Housing Program funds only through a MHSA Housing Program Application approved by CalHFA and DMH.

CalHFA is responsible for the review of the application for all aspects of the project related to purchase, renovation and/or construction of the housing development; underwriting of loans; disbursement of funds; all determinations regarding the use of operating subsidies for the development; and continued monitoring of the project.

DMH is responsible for review of the service related aspects of the application and for monitoring of the project to assure that appropriate supportive services continue to be provided.

Nothing shall prohibit the County from using funds from other programs to supplement the MHSA Housing Program funds, subject to requirements that may be applicable to use of such funds. This Assignment shall be effective only if the county has a fully executed MHSA Agreement with DMH.

Approved for County (by signature)
Printed Name and Title: