

Housing and Recovery through Peer Services (HARPS)

Program overview

Research shows homelessness is traumatic and cyclical. Those with mental health disorders and substance use disorders are most at risk for becoming homeless.

Lack of housing often interferes with access to resources and services; housing insecurity jeopardizes a person's chances for successful recovery. The Housing and Recovery through Peer Services (HARPS) program provides supportive housing services and short-term housing subsidies to at-risk individuals.

At-risk individuals can be those who are exiting or needing to enter inpatient behavioral healthcare settings.

HARPS uses the Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) model from Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Certified Peer counselors deliver these services and follow EBP principles:

- Choice in housing (including location and household composition)
- Access to housing (Housing First)
- Integrated housing (scattered throughout home communities)
- Separation of housing and services
- Rights of tenancy
- Flexible and voluntary services (varying frequency and intensity)
- Safe, decent, and affordable housing

Through the HARPS Program, at-risk individuals can acquire short-term, bridge subsidies to assist with housing costs such as application fees, deposits, first/last month's rent, etc.

Eligibility requirements

HARPS priority populations:

- Individuals who experience behavioral health disorders (either a mental health disorder, substance use disorder, or both) and who demonstrate a medical necessity for inpatient behavioral health services
- Individuals who are discharged from, or at risk of entering:
 - Psychiatric inpatient settings; or
 - Substance abuse treatment inpatient settings
- Individuals who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness (broad definition of homeless, couch surfing included)

Authority

In the 2014 supplemental budget, the legislature adopted 2SSB 6312 and funded three HARPS supportive housing pilot projects in North Sound BH ASO, Greater Columbia BH- ASO, and Great Rivers BH-ASO with these objectives:

- Assist individuals' transition from institutional settings into permanent supportive housing.
- Provide the basis for supportive housing services; and
- Provide integration opportunities between substance use treatment services and BH-ASOs.

Since then, HARPS has continued to expand throughout all ten regions.

Budget

SFY 23

MH Block Grant Funds: \$1,904,400

State General Funds: \$4,956,000

SFY24

MH Block Grant Funds: \$2,813,800

State General Funds: \$4,956,000

Each of the ten regions is allocated funds for bridge subsidies. The bridge subsidy may be used for costs related to housing such as application fees, security

deposits, utilities assistance, and rent. Housing bridge subsidies are estimated at \$2,500 per person over a three-month period.

SFY 22-23 Program Outcomes

Individuals served: 1,914

Individuals housed: 1,832

Individuals who received permanent supportive housing services: 513

Key partners

BH-ASOs and their respective local mental health and housing provider agencies as well as direct contracts with the following providers:

Greater Lakes Mental Healthcare (Pierce region)

Consumer Voices Are Born (Southwest region)

Catholic Charities (North Central region)

For more information

Wanda Johns

Housing and Recovery through Peer Services
Program Manager

wanda.johns@hca.wa.gov