



MOVING ON PROGRAM PROFILE: RETURNING HOME OHIO

Background/Program Description

[Returning Home Ohio](#) (RHO), is a permanent supportive housing (PSH) program funded by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) serving Ohio's returning prison population, specifically those individuals exiting state prison homeless or at risk of homelessness and who also have a disability. The program began as a pilot launched in 2007 and after five successful years in operation, the RHO was adopted as a permanent program of ODRC in 2012. At that same time, ODRC requested CSH implement a process that would limit tenancy funded through ODRC in order to prevent extensive lengths of stay in housing supported by ODRC and to allow for a certain percentage of turnover to make room for new participants. CSH responded to this request by establishing a workgroup of CSH staff and RHO grantees to discuss the formation of a Moving-On initiative instead of imposing an arbitrary time limit on housing for all participants. In this way, the program would include an intentional focus on maximizing self-sufficiency for individuals in the program with periodic assessments that move them toward the ultimate goal of moving them on to more independent living. This allowed for a more individualized process whereby tenants could move on only if and when they are ready, rather than according to a pre-determined exit timeline for all participants.

At the same time, Home for Good was created via a partnership between CSH, ODRC and Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA). Home for Good is a dedicated pool of money used for rental subsidy for those RHO tenants needing long-term supportive housing and who would not be eligible for a traditional subsidy due to their criminal background. It was designed as a safety net for very vulnerable RHO tenants who would otherwise remain under ODRC rental assistance for a lengthy period of time or be taken off that assistance and be at risk of homelessness and/or re-incarceration. The Home for Good rental subsidy positively impacted the development and structure of the RHO Moving-on program as it offered an additional resource for tenants.

Identification and Assessment Process

RHO designed a tool called the Tenant Status Evaluation (TSE). There are two forms – the initial assessment and the update assessment. Both forms are completed in their entirety jointly with the participant. Currently the initial TSE is completed nine months after admission and the update is completed every three months afterward. The initial form is more comprehensive and the update includes progress on the initial form. The initial TSE has a score for each domain and an end score. One of three recommendations can be made:

1. Tenant and caseworker determine that tenant is ready to move-on from the Returning Home Ohio subsidy onto a long-term subsidy within a permanent supportive housing program or into market-rate housing

2. Tenant and caseworker determine that tenant should continue to participate in RHO for the next three months; i.e. a three-month extension in RHO
3. Tenant and caseworker determine that tenant meets eligibility criteria for long-term rental subsidy (Home for Good)

Initiative Partners

Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections

Returning Home Ohio grantees

CSH

Emerald Development and Economic Network (Home for Good)

Funding Sources

All funding for services and housing subsidies through Home for Good come through the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections

Housing Resources

Aside from the Home for Good program, the RHO Moving On program is not formally currently connected to any pipeline of public housing vouchers. Most individuals moving on from RHO move in with family or friends or to available affordable housing units in the private housing market with no rental subsidy. Each RHO provider works in their own community to reach out to landlords and establish their own network. Those with higher needs can be approved for rental subsidies provided by the Home for Good program. Once the unit is vacated, the slot is backfilled with the next eligible offender leaving state prison.

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Services

RHO participants are prepared for the transition to independent housing by the RHO Case Manager. RHO participants usually live in their unit for at least one year, often times longer. Case managers work with participants to link them to health and behavioral health services and other resources in the community before they move to ensure continuity of care. In most cases, case managers are creating these community linkages while they are in RHO. Case managers assist participants in locating and securing housing in the community and provide limited transition support. The program does not currently have the capacity to provide aftercare supports.

Backfilling Supportive Housing Units

Once a RHO unit is vacated, the slot is backfilled with the next eligible ex-offender leaving the Ohio state prison system.