



## Updates & Frequently Asked Questions for Operation Safer Ground Hotel Staff

Updated 04/06/2021

**What information should I be sharing with guests at my Safer Ground hotel site?** It is important that Housing Navigators communicate about hotel closure timelines and work on exit plans for *all* Safer Ground hotel guests. It is critical that stable housing exit plans are created for guests at ALL hotels as soon as possible so that we can successfully support transitions well before hotel closures.

Communication to hotel guests should emphasize that Project Roomkey/ Operation Safer Ground programs continue to be temporary, and all guests will need to work with hotel staff to develop an exit plan.

It is important that communication to hotel guests emphasizes that even though timelines for Project Roomkey’s Operation Safer Ground hotel closures have been extended, the Project Roomkey/ Operation Safer Ground programs continue to be temporary, and all guests will need to work with hotel staff to develop an exit plan. Housing navigators will work with all Project Roomkey guests to identify housing options.

**\*Please Note: Guests housed in the Project Roomkey Housing Transitions (PRHT) program (technically Rapid Rehousing or RRH) can remain eligible for other Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs as prioritized through Coordinated entry.** If a client exits to the PHRT program, **the coordinated entry assessment should remain active and not changed to "housed"**. When a client exits Project Roomkey, it is important to exit the client from the program in HMIS, including identifying the exit location.

### How should hotel staff be entering/coding guest exits in HMIS for those that are transferring to a different Safer Ground site (i.e. Days Hotel or Radisson)?

"Emergency Shelter" is the best exit destination for HMIS program exits for those that are transferring to a different Safer Ground site (i.e. Days Hotel or Radisson). "Project Roomkey Hotel Shelter" should be entered as the FEMA Destination in HMIS. *See screenshot below for reference.* You do not need to enroll these guests into a new program after the transfer as the new site will take care of this.

Project Exit Date	01/01/2021
Destination	Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter
FEMA Destination	Project Roomkey Hotel Shelter
Other FEMA Destinations	<input type="text"/>

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**coordinated entry assessment should remain active and not changed to "housed"**. When a client exits Project Roomkey, it is important to exit the client from the program in HMIS, including identifying the exit location.

**What should I know about navigating the PSH and the RRH/DA Target Lists for hotel guests I work with?**

The Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Target List is used to match individuals experiencing homelessness to PSH opportunities in Alameda County. If you are working with someone on the PSH Target List who has not received an offer of PSH before your Safer Ground site is slated to close, the individual will be offered an opportunity to transfer to one of the sites remaining open until a PSH match can be made. For questions about PSH matching please contact [homestretch@acgov.org](mailto:homestretch@acgov.org).

Safer Ground guests that are not on the PSH target list are eligible to submit a referral for RRH/DA housing opportunities. These referrals are not guaranteed to result in a housing match before the Safer Ground site closes, so housing navigators are encouraged to explore all options for housing guests. For questions about Rapid Rehousing (RRH/DA referrals), including income verification, [covidhousing@acgov.org](mailto:covidhousing@acgov.org).

**What are the eligibility requirements and the timeline for referrals submitted for people on the Rapid Rehousing (RRH)/Deeply Affordable (DA) target list?**

- The primary RRH option for individuals exiting the Safer Ground sites will be the Project Roomkey Housing Transitions (PRHT) program. Basic eligibility for the PRHT program includes **verification of homelessness** and a **verification of income** showing that the household is **at or below 30% median income**. Within a week after submitting a complete referral for the PHRT program you should be hearing from a housing navigator/unit matcher with the Abode PRHT program to continue the process.
- The primary DA option for individuals exiting the Safer Ground sites will be the Oakland Homekey sites. Basic eligibility for the Deeply Affordable Units in Oakland include: **Oakland residency** and **verification of homelessness** and **verification of income** showing that the household has an ongoing source of income to cover the cost of the unit. Depending on the site, there may be additional requirements.

**How can we access documentation required to verify chronic homelessness for hotel guests?**

Verification of chronic homelessness is required for *some* (not all) housing opportunities (typically HUD funded PSH). Showing evidence of chronic homelessness can be difficult and vary based on a client's history. The [HUD Chronic Homelessness Verification Packet](#) that Home Stretch has developed is a helpful resource for understanding what is needed for the verification.

**What should I do if my guest's application for a housing opportunity/ match is denied?** We encourage you to follow-up to find out why an application for an opportunity or match may have been denied. Please note that if an applicant is denied from a housing site you can always appeal. Questions about PSH applications should be directed to Home Stretch and for questions regarding RRH/DA applications please email [COVIDHousing@acgov.org](mailto:COVIDHousing@acgov.org).

**What is the best way to obtain Verification of Income (VOI) for a client?**

Clients should begin by logging into their SSA or Social Security account, or, if they are able, by submitting a bank statement or pay stub. Home Stretch should be contacted for assistance only if a client is unable to obtain a VOI using the previously mentioned online resources.

**How should hotel guests list their rental history in an application for housing?** Guests can use the hotel address as their current address. They can also use past stays at shelters, other hotels or with friends/family.

**If I send a request for information (ROI) to HomeStretch for income verification for a hotel guest, how long will it take to receive this information?** Typical turnaround time for these requests are 5-7 business days. These verifications are also uploaded into HMIS when they come in to HomeStretch.

**Where can I access funds to pay for expenses to remove barriers to housing for a hotel guest (ie. out-of-state birth certificate, transportation assistance, furniture, etc.)?** The Flexible funding through the Housing Resource Centers may be able to provide this type of funding support. The Housing Resource Center (HRC) that you should work with will depend on the region that the client you are working with is from.

**How can I help guests access move-in funds?**

- For those with active Alameda County Medi-Cal, move-in funds, including furniture, can be accessed through the [Home Stretch Housing Assistance Fund](https://everyonehome.org/our-work/home-stretch/). [More information can be found at https://everyonehome.org/our-work/home-stretch/](https://everyonehome.org/our-work/home-stretch/). If you have questions after reviewing the posted documents, please contact [homestretchfund@acgov.org](mailto:homestretchfund@acgov.org).
- [Seasons of Sharing](#) is a one time resource that can be used for move-ins as well as other various needs.
- Alameda County's [Housing Resource Centers](#) also have flexible funds available to help with move-in costs.

**What if a guest is actively working on a housing plan but will not be able to move into the housing unit before the hotel site closes?**

For guests that have a housing plan in process, interim shelter will be part of the solution as they wait for longer term solutions to open. Specific options will be discussed as part of weekly exit planning check-ins.

**Are there resources available to help hotel and operations staff navigate the Project Roomkey exit planning process?** Hotel staff working on PRK exit planning are encouraged to attend technical assistance calls with *housing experts* every other **Wednesday from 9:00-9:30**. These calls are intended to be a resource and place to ask and get answers to questions about the exit planning process and procedures. **This is an excellent opportunity to get answers to your questions in real time!** To be added to the invitation for these calls, please email Anna Fellers at [anna.fellers@acgov.org](mailto:anna.fellers@acgov.org).