

## **GBHHSPC | July 21<sup>st</sup> 2015 Presenter Q&A**

### **Responses from Steven Dashiell, AIRS/Empire Homes**

#### Questions

1) Are Ryan White clients subject to the BDAT list?

Yes. All Baltimore residents, regardless of HIV status, are subject to the BDAT list. Ryan White confers no special privileges or benefits to anyone on the list, save the fact that HIV counts as a disability.

2) Does AIRS set aside a set number of beds for transgender/MSM persons?

No. AIRS is mostly a subsidy based program and does not have “beds” like an organization such as Project PLASE or a shelter. Federal funding does not provide any preference or specialized housing for individuals who are men having sex with other men or transgender.

3) What is AIRS position on trying to reduce homelessness amongst transgender and MSM youths?

As individuals who fall into those categories present themselves, we work with them and their case managers to reduce barriers to provide housing. “Reduce homelessness” from a macro perspective is a structural issue; it requires far more than AIRS do work towards that plan. This concern is better addressed to the Mayor’s Office of Human Services.

4) What can be done to resolve homelessness for those who do not meet HUD's homeless category?

From the point of view of most permanent housing resources in Baltimore, very little – an individual who does not meet the HUD definition of “literally homeless” will be unable to receive permanent supportive housing (PSH) services. Now, they may be able to receive SSO (support services only) from locales like Mercy Supportive Housing, or shelter services, but would not be eligible for permanent housing.

5) How would funding from priority setting aid in housing?

Directives towards housing services allowing for case management and funded agencies to provide short-term housing would be beneficial. The most dangerous gap for many individuals is between being identified on the Coordinated Access list (meaning, reaching the top of the list and selected for housing) and actually being placed in a house. This could take 45-90 days,

where a person is most likely homeless or severely unstably housed. DEFA funds could provide temporary support for these HIV positive persons.

Additionally, Buddy/Companion services that might be directed towards supporting newly housed, formerly homeless HIV positive persons could be beneficial.

6) What can an HIV positive person living in temporary housing do to get into permanent housing?

As said last night, they'd need to get on the Coordinated Access list, and this is done through completion of the BDAT, which can be done by calling 211. If the person was homeless before the temporary housing (meaning a shelter, or a transitional house, or a motel or such for emergency housing), they'd have a high rating and would be eligible for housing much faster.

7) What strategies do you find most effective for staying in touch with individuals who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to ensure that they are able to connect to services?

The Mayors Office of Human Services (MOHS) trains individuals to be navigators to assist those who are homeless and on the Coordinated Access list to stay engaged and connected so they could be potentially housed. This service isn't really fully funded, and if there were navigators specifically targeting HIV positive persons, this could be useful.

8) How does one prove that they have been homeless for x amount of days?

There are three possible ways, which I'll list in the order of preference by HUD. The most reliable (and accepted by HUD) is information that is certified by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party organization via a Declaration of Homelessness. An organization representative (like a case manager) constructs a letter officially certifying that he individual is indeed literally homeless as per HUD definition. The second method is also 3<sup>rd</sup> party, as a navigator or outreach worker for homeless services can attest to the fact that they have seen an individual in a literally homeless state. Lastly (and least reliable by HUD) is a written statement made by the homeless person that they are indeed literally homeless. AIRS and most city organizations who do homeless services will strive for the Declaration.

9) What programs are available for homeless persons returning from jail?

We do specifically have a program called At The Door, which is funded by HUD (under HOPWA) that is transitional/short term housing and some permanent housing slots for individuals who are HIV positive AND released from long term incarceration (meaning 1 year or more). This service can be reached through our main number ([410-576-5070](tel:410-576-5070)) and is specifically for HIV positive ex

offenders. Please note the length of incarceration needs to be at least a year, and a person could have been out of prison/jail for NO MORE than 6 months from time of application

10) What agencies can provide declarations of homelessness?

Effectively any 3<sup>rd</sup> party organization that serves the homeless person in any fashion (such as case management or mental health or substance abuse services) can provide a declaration. The format of the declaration is VERY specific, so an agency should reach out to a housing organization in order to create this.