

 Housing Services Prioritized Access to Housing Support (PATHS) Protocol	Section #	Policy #
	Approval Date: May 24, 2018	Revision Date:
Title:	<b>Prioritization</b>	
Responsibility:	Region Housing Services	
Applies to:	Housing Stability System, including PATHS Team, PATHS Partners, Other System Partners	

## Background

Where the demand for housing support exceeds supply, there is a need to determine how people on the PATHS list will be rank ordered for a housing support offer – from highest priority to lowest priority. Highest priority households get access to resources before lower priority households. People with higher service needs and levels of vulnerability are supported to end their homelessness before those with lower service needs and levels of vulnerability.

The Prioritization Protocol outlines how the prioritization matrix is operationalized in a transparent way. For greater fairness and equity, rules are applied consistently across the region and for all populations. The prioritization process is data-informed and supported with strong engagement and service navigation support (e.g., through the PATHS team) and case conferencing (e.g., to facilitate creative problem-solving).

The prioritization matrix is used to determine how households from the PATHS List that are a match with a housing support vacancy are rank-ordered (prioritized) for an invitation (where there is more than one household that is both interested in the vacancy and that meets the vacancy eligibility criteria). The matching and prioritization processes are completed by Region staff and are based on information held in the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS). For every housing support vacancy, up to three households will be identified and invited to consider the vacancy. Prioritized Access to Housing Support Service Navigators confirm interest in the vacancy with the household(s), and provide support through the Housing Support Agreement process, which looks different depending on the housing support vacancy (e.g. Supportive Housing, Portable Home-Based Support, Other System Partner

Housing Support Programs). This process typically involves the following: invitation, tour and initial interview, support planning meetings, documentation, activities and stays, the housing offer, intake and warm transfer.

As further described in the Operating Details below, three priority populations have been confirmed for the local Housing Stability System:

- **Category A** – people with greater depth of need who are experiencing chronic homelessness.
- **Category B** – people who are highly vulnerable and have less ability to survive homelessness.
- **Category C** – people who have been living without housing the longest; people living in unsheltered locations and/or staying in Emergency Shelter are prioritized first.

### **Operating Details:**

The following criteria outline how households experiencing homelessness will be prioritized for housing support. The VI-SPDAT and full SPDAT will be the common assessment tool used by the Housing Stability System to assess the depth of need of households experiencing homelessness. Note that the first two criteria (Category A) serve as the primary way in which households are prioritized, and the remaining criteria serving as tie breakers if the first two criteria result in tied rankings. For example, should there be five households that are all experiencing chronic homelessness with a VI-SPDAT score of 16, criterion 3 would be used as a tie breaker. Should all five households be considered trimorbid, then criterion 4 would be used as a tie breaker, and so on.

#### **Category A**

1. **Chronic Homelessness:** This first prioritization criterion focuses on those households, often with disabling conditions (e.g. chronic physical or mental illness, substance use issues), who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year. Chronic homelessness is tracked using HIFIS where the sheltering type is listed as one of the following: emergency sheltered, makeshift/street, or transitional housing.
2. **VI-SPDAT and Full SPDAT Score:** This second prioritization criterion targets the most vulnerable households as determined by their total VI-SPDAT and full SPDAT Score. For level four housing support programs, the focus is on high VI-SPDAT and full SPDAT scores. For level three housing support programs, the focus is on medium VI-SPDAT and full SPDAT scores. See Appendix A: Prioritization Matrix for more information.

“Medium” Acuity	“High” Acuity
Youth: 4-9 (VI-SPDAT); 20-33 (SPDAT)	Youth: 10+ (VI-SPDAT); 34+ (SPDAT)
Adults: 4-9 (VI-SPDAT); 20-33 (SPDAT)	Adults: 10+ (VI-SPDAT); 34+ (SPDAT)
Families: 4-8 (VI-SPDAT); 27-53 (SPDAT)	Families: 9+ (VI-SPDAT); 54+ (SPDAT)

**Category B**

- 3. **Tri-morbidity:** The third prioritization criteria involves the presence of co-occurring mental health, physical health and substance use issues, giving priority to those households that are experiencing tri-morbidity. Tri-morbidity is captured in the Wellness domain of the VI-SPDAT, and is based on self-reported information and a score of 1 for each of the following: physical health (e.g. a yes to any of questions 15-19), substance use (e.g. a yes to question 20 and/or 21), and mental health (e.g. a yes to question 22 and/or 23)). Tri-morbidity is also captured in a score of 3 or 4 in all of the following domains of the SPDAT: Mental Health and Wellness and Cognitive Functioning, Physical Health and Wellness, and Substance Use.
- 4. **Elevated Risk:** The fourth prioritization criteria looks at a household’s involvement in abusive, higher-risk and/or exploitative situations. Elevated risk is captured in the Risks domain of the VI-SPDAT, and is based on self-reported information related to Risk of Exploitation specific questions (e.g. a yes to question 8 and/or 9). Elevated risk is also captured in a score of 3 or 4 in the Involvement in Higher Risk and/or Exploitive Situations domain of the SPDAT.
- 5. **Critical Safety:** The fifth prioritization criteria involves households who have exhausted most of their sheltering options in Waterloo Region and have nowhere else to go that is safe and appropriate. This is documented in a Critical Safety Plan.

**Category C**

- 6. **Length of Time Living Without Permanent Housing:** Should all of the above criteria be equal, the final prioritization criteria involve people who have been living without housing the longest based on the date they are added to the PATHS list, with people living in unsheltered locations and/or staying in Emergency Shelter prioritized first.

For additional information, see also: [Prioritized Access to Housing Support \(PATHS\) Framework](#) approved by Regional Council in December 2017

## Appendix A: Prioritization Matrix

Category	Prioritization Factors for Level 3 Housing Support Programs (e.g. Portable Home-Based Support)	Prioritization Factors for Level 4 Housing Support Programs (e.g. Supportive Housing, Portable Home-Based Support)
(A) Acuity and Chronic Homelessness	Chronic Homelessness  AND  "Medium" Acuity	Chronic Homelessness  AND  "High" Acuity
(B) Specific Vulnerables	Tri-Morbidity	
	Elevated Risk	
	Critical Safety List	
(C) Housing History	Length of Time Living Without Permanent Housing	

## Appendix B: Matching and Prioritization in PATHS

The process below illustrates the automation of matching and prioritization using PATHS:

### Vacancy Notification:

- Region notified of a Supportive Housing vacancy at Service Provider X
- Vacancy is in Shared Living with Own Room. Need to refer at least one household that:
  - 1) Both wants the vacancy and meets the eligibility criteria (matching); and
  - 2) Ranks high for vulnerability factors (prioritization)

### Matching:

Take the following list:

- Reminder: vacancy is in Supportive Housing, shared living with own room. No additional eligibility factors (e.g. gender, accessibility).

Looking for a Yes

First Name	Contact Person & Agency	PATHS Status	Date added to PATHS	Tasks Done - Waiting on PATHS (in months)	Final Status (as of last update)	Initial or Most Recent VY-SPDAA (Updated Based on Fall)	Timeliness	Elevated Risk	Critical Safety Plan	Chronic - Y/N (y/n) (Homeless => 6 months in prev. year)	Housing Needs and Preference Form Date Complete	Preferred Location	Preference for STEP Home	CHIP SH Shared with Own Room Y/N	CHIP SH Y/N	Completed CHAC Application Y/N	Preference for Thresholds (BIP or AIBB) Y/N
A		Assigned	21-Aug-2017	6	17	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	21-Aug-17	both K-W	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
B		Added	1-Jul-2016	20	16	Yes	Yes	Critical Safety		Yes	1-Jan-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C		Added	16-Aug-2017	7	16	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	16-Aug-17	both K-W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
D		Added	1-Dec-2016	39	16	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	3-Oct-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
E		Added	1-Dec-2014	29	16	N/A	Yes	No		Yes	1-Feb-17	Cambridge	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
F		Added	9-Jan-2018	2	16	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	24-Jul-17	Cambridge	Yes	No	No	No	No
H		Added	24-Apr-2017	10	16	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	14-Nov-17	Cambridge	Yes	No	No	No	No
I		Assigned	21-Nov-2017	3	16	Yes	Yes	Critical Safety		Yes	21-Nov-17	both K-W	Yes	No	No	No	No
J		Added	1-Sep-2016	18	16	Yes	Yes	Critical Safety		Yes	4-May-17	Cambridge	Yes	No	No	No	No
K		Added	16-May-2017	10	16	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	16-May-17	both K-W	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
L		Added	17-May-2017	10	16	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	17-May-17	both K-W	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
N		Added	17-May-2017	10	16	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	17-May-17	Cambridge	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
O		Assigned	15-Apr-2015	25	16	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	29-Nov-16	both K-W	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
P		Added	31-Jan-2018	1	16	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	23-Jun-17	Cambridge	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Q		Added	30-Aug-2017	6	16	Yes	Yes	Critical Safety		Yes	30-Aug-17	both K-W	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
R		Added	28-Aug-2015	30	16	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	24-Mar-17	Kitchener	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
S		Added	22-Feb-2017	12	16	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	10-Mar-17	Cambridge	Yes	No	No	No	No

- Have filtered for a "Yes" in Shared Living with Own Room. Four people remain for prioritization.

First Name	Contact Person & Agency	PATHS Status	Date added to PATHS	Total time Waiting on PATHS (in months)	Initial or Most Recent Y/SP/DA (Updates Based on Full)	Tri-morbidity	Elevated Risk	Critical Safety Plan	Chronic - Y/N (scale) (Homeless => 6 months in prev. year)	Housing Needs and Preference Form Date Complete	Preferred Location	Preference for STEP Home	CHPI SH Shared with Own Room Y/N	CHPI SH Y/N	Complete of CHAC Application Y/N	Preference for Thresholds (RH or ASH) Y/N
B		Added	1-Jul-2016	20	16	Yes	Yes	Critical Safety	Yes	1-Jan-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C		Added	16-Aug-2017	7	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	16-Aug-17	both K-W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
D		Added	1-Dec-2014	39	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	3-Oct-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
N		Added	17-May-2017	10	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	17-May-17	Cambridge	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

**Prioritization:**

Will apply the prioritization matrix to determine how households are rank ordered for referral.

- Based on Acuity and Chronic Homelessness (A), all four are tied. Move to Specific Vulnerabilities (B).

(A) Acuity and Chronic Homelessness	Medium Acuity	High Acuity
	AND	
(B) Specific Vulnerabilities	Chronic Homelessness	Chronic Homelessness
	Tri-Morbidity	
	Elevated Risk	
(C) Housing History	Critical Safety List	
	Length of Time Living Without Permanent Housing	

Acuity

Chronic Homelessness

First Name	Contact Person & Agency	PATHS Status	Date added to PATHS	Total time Waiting on PATHS (in months)	Initial or Most Recent Y/SP/DA (Updates Based on Full)	Tri-morbidity	Elevated Risk	Critical Safety Plan	Chronic - Y/N (scale) (Homeless => 6 months in prev. year)	Housing Needs and Preference Form Date Complete	Preferred Location	Preference for STEP Home	CHPI SH Shared with Own Room Y/N	CHPI SH Y/N	Complete of CHAC Application Y/N	Preference for Thresholds (RH or ASH) Y/N
B		Added	1-Jul-2016	20	16	Yes	Yes	Critical Safety	Yes	1-Jan-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C		Added	16-Aug-2017	7	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	16-Aug-17	both K-W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
D		Added	1-Dec-2014	39	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	3-Oct-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
N		Added	17-May-2017	10	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	17-May-17	Cambridge	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

- Based on Specific Vulnerabilities (B), all scored a Yes for Trimorbidity and Elevated Risk. Only one has a Critical Safety Plan – they would be rank ordered #1

(A)	Medium Acuity	High Acuity
Acuity and Chronic Homelessness	AND Chronic Homelessness	AND Chronic Homelessness
(B)	Tri-Morbidity	
Specific Vulnerabilities	Elevated Risk	
(C)	Length of Time Living Without Permanent Housing	
Housing History		

Trimorbidity    Elevated Risk    Critical Safety Plan

First Name	Contact Person & Agency	PATHS Status	Date added to PATHS	Total time Waiting on PATHS (in months)	Union Loc Most Recent VISPDA (calculate)	Trimorbidity (Update Based on Fall)	Elevated Risk	Critical Safety Plan	Chronic - Y/N (calc) (homeless => 6 months in prev. year)	Housing Needs and Preference Form Date Complete	Preferred Location	Preference for STEP Home	CHPI SH Shared with Own Room Y/N	CHPI SH Y/N	Completed CHAC Application Y/N	Preference for Thresholds (BH or ASH) Y/N
B		Added	1-Jul-2016	20	16	Yes	Yes	Critical Safety	Yes	1-Jan-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C		Added	16-Aug-2017	7	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	16-Aug-17	both K-W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
D		Added	1-Dec-2014	39	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	3-Oct-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
N		Added	17-May-2017	10	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	17-May-17	Cambridge	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

- To rank the remaining three households, we look at Housing History (C), or the total time waiting on PATHS. Person D has been waiting the longest, followed by Person N

Length of Time Living Without Permanent Housing

First Name	Contact Person & Agency	PATHS Status	Date added to PATHS	Total time Waiting on PATHS (in months)	Union Loc Most Recent VISPDA (calculate)	Trimorbidity (Update Based on Fall)	Elevated Risk	Critical Safety Plan	Chronic - Y/N (calc) (homeless => 6 months in prev. year)	Housing Needs and Preference Form Date Complete	Preferred Location	Preference for STEP Home	CHPI SH Shared with Own Room Y/N	CHPI SH Y/N	Completed CHAC Application Y/N	Preference for Thresholds (BH or ASH) Y/N
B	#1	Added	1-Jul-2016	20	16	Yes	Yes	Critical Safety	Yes	1-Jan-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C	#4	Added	16-Aug-2017	7	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	16-Aug-17	both K-W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
D	#2	Added	1-Dec-2014	39	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	3-Oct-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
N	#3	Added	17-May-2017	10	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	17-May-17	Cambridge	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

**Refer to Service Provider:**

- At least one household is referred to the Service Provider with the vacancy, where they will initiate a Housing Support Agreement. This includes several parts (e.g., invitation, tour/interview, follow-ups, intake, and move-in transitions). The end result is either an acceptance or decline of the housing support offer.