



Georgia Department of Behavioral Health
& Developmental Disabilities

Judy Fitzgerald, Commissioner

Division of Behavioral Health

To: All Regions and DBHDD-Contracted Providers with Housing Outreach Coordinators
From: Maxwell Ruppensburg, Director, Office of Supportive Housing, DBHDD
Date: April 3, 2020
Re: Guidance for Housing Outreach Coordinators during COVID-19

In response to the statewide Shelter in Place order and Public Health State of Emergency in Georgia as a result of COVID-19, as well as the increasing pressures placed on the homeless and behavioral health system across the state, DBHDD and the Office of Supportive Housing is authorizing temporary programmatic changes, including guidance for Housing Outreach Coordinators, until further notice.

Currently in effect, all NSH referrals, upon approval, will receive a Notice to Proceed for GHVP and are not being asked to apply first for alternative resources. We are also making additional programmatic accommodations to support individuals during this crisis and those will continue to evolve.

During this time, we know that standard HOC outreach activity must change and adapt as a result of limited access to facilities and the cessation of community meetings. It is critical that HOCs continue to remain active so that we can continue to connect individuals to housing and keep them housed.

In response to this situation, we are asking that HOCs focus their time to support the priorities below.

Housing Outreach Coordinators should prioritize the following activities in this period:

1. Assisting with annual lease renewals to keep individuals stably housed.
2. Providing NSH assessment surveys and completion of referrals.
3. Identifying housing opportunities in the community and assist with housing search and leasing.

In addition to the above priorities, please continue with the following:

4. Review completed NSH surveys and close out the referrals, as needed. Follow up with individuals with a completed NSH intake who are not yet connected to services and/or supportive housing.
5. Continue to communicate regularly with your Regional Field Office and the Central Office to relay any questions you have or challenges being experienced.
6. Continue conducting calls and following up with assigned medical and correctional facilities.
7. Provide assistance at outpatient clinics and/or crisis centers to facilitate services for homeless individuals.
8. Participate in COVID-19 related and other learning opportunities via conference calls and webinars.
9. Coordinate resources with the PATH team in your area.
10. Make contact with the local homeless Continuum of Care to stay aware of resources and collaborations in the local area.
11. Make contact with the DCS regional coordinator for coordination of cases for individuals on supervision.

Please continue to exercise personal caution and recommended physical distancing, regular handwashing, and hygiene practices to safeguard the health of yourself and those around you. The work of Housing Outreach Coordinators and the provider network remains critical and ever needed during this time of crisis for so many around the state.

DBHDD Commissioner Judy Fitzgerald has issued a [letter of exemption](#) stating that the Governor's Shelter in Place order does not apply to DBHDD essential services which includes Housing Outreach Coordinators. This letter is not required by law but was requested by some providers and can be utilized if needed.

Please be sure to regularly check the [CDC](#) and [Georgia DPH](#) websites for the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and remember to be vigilant about personal hygiene.

If you have additional questions that relate to COVID-19 please submit them to the provider relations email so that they are properly tracked. That email is DBHDD.Provider@DBHDD.GA.GOV

We appreciate everything you do!

cc:

Monica Johnson, Director, Division of Behavioral Health
 Adrian Johnson, Assistant Director, Division of Behavioral Health
 Letitia Robinson, Assistant Director, Office of Supportive Housing

Regional Housing Transition Coordinators Contact Information

Region	Name	Email
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Housing Outreach Coordinator Contact Information

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