



PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT

W&I Code Section 4689 Rental Assistance (RA) & Affordable Accessible Housing Services Vendor # HQ0341

Report Period: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

Report Submitted: August 31, 2023

This Program Evaluation Report is a summary of the outcomes and results of the required processes for W&I Code Section 4689 Rental Assistance (RA) & Affordable Accessible Housing Services.

I. Rental Assistance (RA)

The intent of RA is to help individuals who meet San Diego Regional Center (SDRC) eligibility criteria and offer them the opportunity to live in the community by providing interim rental assistance until long term funding such as Section 8 housing vouchers are secured. Since its inception, RA support has tremendously impacted hundreds of peoples' ability to successfully live on their own. The lack of affordable housing options in Southern California has hit a critical point and significantly impacts people with disabilities. The average wait for Section 8 housing in the greater San Diego area is more than ten years, and all local waiting lists remain long - some are over 18 years.

The SDRC RA program administered by Community Interface Services (CIS) is evaluated annually for the following criteria:

A. Process RA Assessments and Determine Eligibility

1. *Receive and review RA Assessments from Service Coordinators (SC)*

Assessments for individuals were received from SDRC SC's, reviewed for agreed upon RA eligibility during the fiscal year, and retained on record with CIS whether or not the participant qualified for RA. Exceptions for eligibility criteria were reviewed with planning teams and allowed only with planning team consensus and SDRC approval.

2. *Check Section 8 eligibility with the proper Housing Authority*

- a. *If individual is eligible for Section 8 waitlist but on the wrong one, then assist individual to transfer to correct waitlist***
- b. *If not on the Section 8 waitlist, then assist individual to sign up***
- c. *If individual is not eligible for Section 8, then determine reason and if it is time limited. Inform individual and SC***
- d. *Send individual enrollment and educational information***

Section 8 eligibility was verified with the proper Housing Authority for all individuals to ensure they were signed up and on the correct wait list; follow-up was provided if necessary. Assistance and information regarding Section 8 was provided. RA staff work with each participant's team to ensure participant successfully signs up for Section 8 waitlist.

3. *Verify accuracy of information on assessment*

- a. *Contact individual, Independent Living/Supported Living provider/SC as needed to clarify/obtain information***
- b. *Obtain a current copy of the Lease Agreement to be kept on file***
- c. *If individual is working, obtain paystubs to verify income***

The assessments received were reviewed for accuracy. Individuals, SCs, and support staff were contacted for verification of the information provided. The lease agreements were collected, cross-checked with the assessments for consistency, and kept on record. If individuals worked, paystubs were requested and received to verify income.

4. *Facilitate Landlord acceptance of RA payment*

- a. *Determine landlord acceptance of rental assistance payments***
- b. *Collect W-9 for tax purposes***

RA continued to facilitate landlord acceptance of RA payments. Landlords were provided information and encouraged to accept the RA payments. As usual, some landlords were open to receiving the payments or familiar with similar programs like Section 8, but others were hesitant. W-9 forms were collected for tax purposes from all landlords of active RA individuals. At the end of the calendar year, 1099s were prepared, submitted, and emailed to landlords.

5. *Determine if individual meets eligibility requirements for participation*

Twenty-one individuals were found eligible for RA, up from fourteen last year. All twenty-one of them had assistance payments begin during the fiscal year.

6. *Calculate rental assistance amount*

Twenty-one rental assistance amounts were calculated during the fiscal year with SDRC approval with an average amount of \$737.00/month based on income and rent ceilings.

7. *Notify individual and SC of eligibility determination and rental assistance amount, if eligible*

- a. *Register RA as the primary housing contact on behalf of the individual***
- b. *Request ongoing rental assistance and service funding from SC***
 - i. *Notify individual and landlord of payment start date***

For most RA participants, CIS was established as the primary contact with the appropriate Housing Authority. As all the Housing Authorities had staff working from home during the year due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and aftermath, continued extra diligence from CIS staff members was required to ensure RA was noted as the primary contact with them and communications were received from them for each participant served by RA. Ongoing RA and service funding were requested from the SDRC SC. The individual, SC, and Independent Living/Supported Living provider were notified of eligibility, RA start dates, and subsequent changes that occurred.

B. *Ongoing Rental Assistance*

1. *Issue monthly rental assistance checks/electronic fund transfers in accordance with the information on file and authorized rental assistance payment amount*

Throughout the year, an average of 201 rental assistance payments were issued per month, down from an average 208 last fiscal year. The average rental assistance payment was \$667.40 per month. The maximum rental assistance payment was \$4,600.00/month for the fiscal year for a participant who transitioned out of a CCH home, paying participant's full rent. The minimum payment was \$50.00/month.

2. *Process changes to assistance amounts/re-determine eligibility*

- a. *Moves – process new landlord, obtain copy of lease, etc.***

- b. *Changes in living situation – roommate changes, birth of a child, marriage, divorce, etc. – verify information***
- c. *Changes in rent – obtain copy of lease***
- d. *Increases or decreases in income – obtain documentation***
- e. *Update Fair Market Rent values and income eligibility requirements on a semi-annual basis and adjust subsidies/eligibility criteria accordingly***

Changes based on moves, living situations/household make-up, and rent/income amounts were processed, and assistance amounts were adjusted accordingly. RA amounts for a single person are calculated as agreed upon with SDRC, generally based on an average of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) recent Fair Market Rent (FMR) based on size of unit. The RA FMR calculation was reviewed in depth with SDRC and compared to current Section 8 practices. After analysis, slight change was agreed upon for FY 22-23, and the RA FMR amount was determined to be based on size of the actual unit.

3. *Monitor/forward correspondence with/from Housing Authorities; monitor waitlist status, requirements, or changes*

- a. *Assist RA recipients to maintain active waitlist status***
- b. *Assist RA recipients to switch to the appropriate Housing Authority waitlist if the individual moves or gets a new job***

Maintaining an active Section 8 waitlist status for all RA individuals has always been critical to the success and interim aspect of RA. CIS attempts to maintain close communication with all the local Housing Authorities and works diligently to monitor the waitlist status of each RA individual. Communication with Housing Authorities continues to be difficult during the COVID-19 pandemic due to remote work and reported short staffing at the Housing Authorities. Section 8 eligibility was updated at annual reviews and any time an individual moved. CIS maintained regular communications with each housing authority, monitored/forwarded correspondence with/from Housing Authorities, worked closely with individuals and their support teams to comply with the requirements to maintain waitlist status, and advocated for individuals if their names were dropped from the waitlist.

4. *Complete Semiannual Review*

- a. *Verify current status with individual, IL/SL provider, and /or SC***
- b. *Request updated income/rent information***
- c. *Re-determine eligibility and assistance amount***

Semiannual reviews were conducted for each individual. Current status was verified with individuals, IL/SL providers, and/or SCs. Updated income/rent information was requested, and RA eligibility re-determined. Assistance amounts were recalculated as needed; individuals, SCs, and Independent Living/Supported Living providers were notified of any changes to RA payments. All files were reviewed to verify that a current signed Individual Program Plan (IPP) Addendum was included, and Addendums were requested as needed.

5. *Complete Annual Review*

- a. *Send annual assessment to SC to complete; receive assessment, review for accuracy***
- b. *Check status on Section 8 waitlist***
- c. *Request paystubs if working***
- d. *Request copy of current lease agreement if rent has changed***
- e. *Re-determine eligibility and assistance amount***

An annual assessment was required for all individuals. Each assessment was reviewed thoroughly, and information was verified with the SC as well as the IL/SL provider. During the review process, the individual's status on the Section 8 waiting list was verified, and paystubs and a copy of the new lease, if applicable, were requested. Assistance amounts were adjusted as needed, and all parties were notified of changes to the RA payments.

6. Process exits from RA

- a. *If individual no longer meets eligibility, then inform individual/SC; cease rental assistance*
- b. *If individual reaches the top of a Section 8 waitlist, work with individual, SC, IL/SL provider to ensure Section 8 timelines and requirements are met. Stop RA assistance once Section 8 assistance begins*

Exits from RA were processed during the fiscal year and close communication was kept with individuals and SCs if a concern about RA eligibility requirements arose. Individuals and SCs were informed when no longer eligible, and the RA payments ceased. At times, RA payments were placed on hold while individuals secured housing or handled personal situations.

During the FY 22-23, 26 participants exited for the following reasons:

- 11 successfully transitioned to receiving Section 8 vouchers
- 6 no longer met income or residence eligibility requirements to receive RA
- 4 moved into housing situations that did not meet RA criteria such as with family, a skilled nursing facility, or a group home
- 3 moved out of the area
- 2 passed away

It is anticipated that at least one additional individual will stop receiving RA payments in the early part of FY 23-24, as they are in the final stages of approval for their Section 8 voucher.

II. Affordable Accessible Housing Services

A. Individualized Housing Services

1. *Homeownership: support/advocate for the individual/family during the home buying process, assist with locating resources to purchase a home, meet with lenders/realtors, discuss the responsibilities that come with owning a home, assist in applying for any/all generic and specialized financial assistance available through city/county/ other agencies, assist with attending home buying/credit classes as needed, etc*

The Housing Market in San Diego County remains extremely challenging, especially for first time and low-income homebuyers. CIS continues to support/advocate for individuals/families and provided information to individuals who inquired about the home buying process and services available to support them, but no formal referrals were received this fiscal year, most likely due to the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the tight housing market.

2. *Affordable/Accessible Housing: support/advocate for individual in obtaining appropriate rental housing, requesting reasonable accommodations with Section 8, exploring resources/ creative options to meet needs, etc*

The importance of supporting individuals to locate affordable, accessible housing continues to be recognized. Affordable, accessible housing services and resources were provided to

individuals when requested, and information about how to request reasonable accommodations was shared. CIS continues to support/advocate for individuals to obtain appropriate rental housing, requesting reasonable accommodations with Section 8, and exploring resources/creative options to meet needs.

B. General Housing Services

1. *Provide general housing information/resource referral to individuals, family members, IL/SL Agencies, SCs as requested*

Housing resources, including rental unit availability, were distributed to individuals, family members, Independent/Supported Living providers, and Service Coordinators as requested. Program Staff responded to requests during the fiscal year and provided information regarding Section 8/Housing Authorities, affordable housing units in new housing complexes around San Diego County, and CIS homeownership supports.

2. *Coordinate and facilitate the Homeownership Coalition of San Diego County*

CIS continued to gather resources for current and potential homeowners as requested. The Homeownership Coalition of San Diego County meetings ceased during the pandemic due to a lack of interest. Funds remain on hand from a grant received from the Foundation for Developmental Disabilities (FDD) in FY 15-16; additional fundraising efforts are on hold until the funds on hand are all allocated. Due to the tight housing market and lack of individuals pursuing homeownership at this time, permission was granted by FDD to use the funds to help current homeowners rehabilitate or modify their homes to meet their current health and safety needs; one person has explored the use of funds in this way.

3. *Attend trainings and meetings as appropriate such as the Southern California Public Housing Authority Area-Wide Meetings*

Throughout the fiscal year, Program Staff kept abreast of fair housing information and other housing updates especially related to Section 8 information, continues to collaborate with SDRC and others regarding rental assistance, and obtains housing related information on a local, state, and federal level to disseminate as appropriate.

4. *Maintain website with information regarding RA, 1:1 Homeownership, Affordable/Accessible Housing and Advocacy Services*

As part of the Community Interface Services website, a webpage was maintained with housing resources. See <http://www.communityinterfaceservices.org/housing-services>.