



Lycoming County's Supportive Housing Program (SHP) *FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS*



- 1. *What is SHP?*** Lycoming County's Supportive Housing Program—administered by STEP, Inc.—is a focused 18-month housing initiative to assist renters in danger of being evicted, homeowners in danger of foreclosure, and homeless county residents (sheltered or unsheltered) to secure a stable housing arrangement. All clients will work with STEP's Service Navigation staff to identify and address issues that impede individuals and families from becoming self-sufficient.
- 2. *What is service navigation/case management?*** STEP's Service Navigation team provides holistic case management services to customers. An initial assessment is completed and the customer and navigator work together to develop a plan that outlines the steps to be taken to achieve self-sufficiency, including not only housing issues but the underlying issues that lead to housing instability. The amount of contact is determined by the customer's level of need. Customer success is evaluated regularly through their goal plan and use of a self-sufficiency matrix.
- 3. *What is SHP's Tier One?*** Tier One customers are in crisis or the beginning stages of achieving self-sufficiency. Customers receive service navigation to assist them with their immediate needs, build foundational skills for self-sufficiency, and then move toward achieving long-term self-sufficiency. Anyone can refer an individual or family to Tier One, including but not limited to the customer themselves and/or community agencies.
- 4. *What is SHP's Tier Two?*** Tier Two candidates have made some progress towards self-sufficiency and the Referral Partner agency deems them ready to take the next step towards achieving self-sufficiency. Tier Two customers receive service navigation and monetary assistance to help them "over the top". To become eligible for Tier Two consideration, all Tier One customers must first align themselves with a Referral Partner community agency. Referrals to SHP Tier Two can only be made by selected Referral Partners. Tier One customers can become Tier Two customers if referred by a Referral Partner and they meet eligibility requirements. STEP is not considered a Referral Partner and cannot make referrals to Tier Two.
- 5. *What financial support does SHP provide to Tier Two customers?*** Tier Two customers may be eligible for monetary assistance for expenses such as a security deposit and utility, rent, and mortgage payments. A plan will be developed with the customer for the amount of financial assistance received from SHP to decrease throughout the program as the customer increases their ability to pay their debts without financial assistance.
- 6. *How many Tier One and Tier Two customers might be helped?*** The goal of SHP is to assist 50 customers (individuals or families) in Tier One. It is anticipated that approximately 24 of those customers will move into the Tier Two program.
- 7. *Who is eligible for SHP?*** SHP customers must demonstrate that they:

- Have been a resident of Lycoming County for a minimum of at least one year (12 months) over the past few years.
- Meet the following income guidelines: Thirty percent (30%) of PHARE funds will be allocated to assist households earning no more than 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) or \$22,278; up to 70% of funds can be used to assist households earning no more than 200% of the AMI or \$89,114.
- Have limited housing options and have exhausted available alternatives to secure housing or monies to retain existing housing.
- Demonstrate a level of commitment to their own growth and agree to participate in Service Navigation.

8. How do I apply or make a referral to SHP? SHP applications are available at STEP and Referral Partner agencies. Completed applications can be submitted to STEP Service Navigation. You do not need to meet with STEP staff to apply for SHP but we will provide assistance if needed. Additionally, it is important that you let STEP staff know if you are in crisis or need immediate assistance so that someone can assist you in a timely manner. Please Note: Tier Two applications must be completed by a Referral Partner agency.

All applications will be reviewed and evaluated, and customers who meet eligibility criteria will be interviewed by the SHP team. Customers accepted into Tier Two will need to agree to follow the Participating Customer Agreement. Customers not accepted into SHP will be provided with information and referral to other STEP programs or community agencies or programs that may better meet their needs.

9. Who is the Lead Agency and what is their role? As Lead Agency, STEP will function as the main point of contact and administrator of the SHP on behalf of the County of Lycoming, which is managing the current grant from PHFA. As such, STEP will plan, implement, and execute all tasks set forth in the SHP Statement of Work, either using in-house resources directly or working through one of its many community partners.

10. How does the Lycoming County Housing Coalition relate to SHP? The Coalition was a driving force in defining and championing the need for SHP. They helped determine the most critical housing needs in the community and assisted the County in shaping the parameters for SHP.

11. What is the role of the SHP Advisory Committee? The Committee will be appointed by the Lycoming County Commissioners to advise the county as it oversees the work of the selected Lead Agency (STEP, Inc.) to implement the Lycoming County Supportive Housing Program. As such, the Committee will provide professional expertise to help Lycoming County and the Lead Agency build a successful supportive housing program; attend and participate in quarterly committee meetings; review any materials and email communications as needed when disseminated between meetings; and alert Lycoming County to potential future sources of funding to sustain and potentially expand the program.

12. What is a Referral Partner, who is eligible, and how do I become one? All Lycoming County community organizations can apply to become an SHP Referral Partner. Referral Partners provide services to customers who may be appropriate for referral to the SHP and have demonstrated past success with county residents who have faced complex and multi-tiered social and economic challenges. Referral Partners maintain a commitment to the success of

their customers who are accepted into Tier Two of the SHP, and receive a stipend of \$1,000 per customer accepted into Tier Two to continue providing services for a period of time as identified in the transition plan and utilizing the ClientTrack database. The candidate agency becomes an official Referral Partner once its first nominated customer enters the SHP Tier Two program. Referral Partner applications are available at STEP and on STEP's website at www.stepcorp.org/SupportiveHousing. Forms can be submitted to Service Navigation.

- 13. Why is there a strong funding commitment for service navigation?** Research confirms that families and individuals experiencing a housing crisis have immediate and long-term issues—both must be addressed. Service Navigation defines and strives to address/resolve the underlying issues that 1) created or contributed to the immediate housing crisis and 2) inhibit the customer from attaining a measurable degree of self-sufficiency. Making changes to one's life style and coping skills takes a sustained commitment of time and energy from both the STEP navigator and the customer being served. Twelve months or longer is not unusual.
- 14. As a landlord with housing to rent, what do I need to do?** Any Landlord can visit the PHFA website and directly go to the tab: "List Rentals." The landlord can set up a new account, get registered, and enter their rental property information as requested. STEP will use the PHFA web site, as needed, to support SHP Tier Two customers seeking housing.
- 15. What is the funding source and timeline for SHP?** The program is funded by a PHFA award of Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement (PHARE) funds to Lycoming County in the amount of \$500,000. SHP is planned and approved as an 18-month program and is authorized through the end of 2017.
- 16. Where can I find more information about SHP?** Additional information can be found at the following web sites: www.stepcorp.org; www.lyco.org; and www.cityofwilliamsport.org.