










# The Housing Conversation Tool

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The Housing Conversation Tool (HCT) allows you to refer your client for open housing opportunities. The HCT was designed to replace all VI-SPDAT assessments as well as other housing assessment tools like the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Assessment and the LEAP Assessments. Additionally, using questions and filtering, this one assessment can serve a variety of clients. This assessment should be used for:

- Households who are experiencing homelessness
- Households who are at risk of experiencing homelessness
- Households comprised of only adults (>17 years old)
-  Households with adult and minor children (<18 years old)
- Households with only minor children (<18 years old)

Please note that the term “households” can reference an individual client. Additionally, there are programs in our CoC that serve minor children without the presence of an adult. A good example of this would be a runaway youth program.

## **When Do You Complete a Housing Conversation Tool Assessment**

The Housing Conversation Tool should be completed when a household is seeking to explore housing opportunities within CAS such as Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Housing, or Permanent Supportive Housing. We also use this assessment for LEAP, CalAIM, and some Transitional Housing programs. A new assessment should be completed when there are significant changes in the household. Note: Please make sure that a service or assessment is completed every 90 days to keep the client active on the CAS HCT Priority List.

## *How to Complete the HCT*

To complete a Housing Conversation Tool Assessment, you must first switch over to the Sacramento CoC Coordinated Access System (CAS) agency in HMIS. Enter the client's CAS agency enrollment and click on the Assessments tab. Under this tab, you will see the assessments available in this enrollment, which includes the Housing Conversation Tool. Please read the questions carefully and fill them out completely, as you would any other assessment. Please see the image below for clarification. Note: if your client is not yet enrolled in a CAS agency program, then you must enroll them before you can complete any CAS related assessments.

## *Additional Required Assessments*

When completing the HCT, there are two additional assessments that you must complete. First, you need to complete the client's CAS Individualized Support Plan (CAS-ISP). Following that, you need to complete a Current Living Situation to document the client's physical location.

### **Don't Forget to Complete a CAS Individualized Support Plan**

Completing a CAS Individualized Support Plan (CAS ISP) immediately after a Housing Conversation Tool (HCT) is a core requirement of the Coordinated Access System. This process is subject to regular monitoring and is part of the established CAS protocols outlined in the CAS Assessor User Agreement. Failure to adhere to this procedure may result in direct notices and progressive action to ensure compliance. Please see the [CAS Individualized Support Plan Job Aid](#) for additional instructions.

## Don't Forget to Complete a Current Living Situation Assessment

As with all other CAS related assessments, you must complete a Current Living Situation (CLS) assessment after completing or updating an HCT. The CLS provides an update on the client's situation and is needed to document homeless chronicity and determine location-based eligibility. If you do not complete a CLS after completing any CAS assessment, you may be negatively impacting your client's homeless chronicity and limiting their eligibility for housing opportunities. Please see the [CLS Assessment Job Aid](#) for additional instructions.

## Directions for Specific Questions

While the majority of the HCT's questions are standard and easy to understand, there are a few that may be confusing. Please refer to the list below for any additional guidance you may need to complete the assessment correctly.

## Housing Types and Homeless Categories

There are many housing types available in the Sacramento CoC with unique eligibility requirements and service levels. Please review this table to best determine which types of housing would best fit your client's needs and eligibility status. For more information about this table, please visit the [Housing Conversation Tool Best Practice Guide](#) on the SSF website. You can also visit the [HUD Exchange page explaining homeless categories](#).

Housing	Services	Eligibility	Voucher	Rental Subsidy Length
Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)	Intensive and Frequent	Chronically homeless (requires disability) Literally Homeless	Project and Tenant	Permanent with optional "move-on" voucher available
Permanent Housing with Services (PH)	Moderate and Infrequent*	Varies, can include At-Risk of Homelessness	Project**	Permanent provided client remains eligibility for voucher.
Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) ESG funded	Moderate and Infrequent	Literally Homeless	Project and Tenant	6-24 months
Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) CoC funded	Moderate and Infrequent	Homeless Categories 1-4	Tenant	6-24 months
Permanent Housing without Services (PH)	Little to None or One-Time	Varies, can include At-Risk of Homelessness	Tenant	Permanent provided client remains eligible for voucher.***
Shallow Subsidy	Little to None or One-Time	Veterans at-risk of homelessness	Project and Tenant	Up to 24 months
Rapid Exit	Little to None or One-Time	Homeless Categories 1-4 and other definitions	n/a	One-time
Homelessness Prevention (HP)	Little to None or One-Time	At-risk or Imminent Risk of Homelessness	n/a	One-time
Supportive Services Only (SSO)	Little to None or One-Time	Varies, can include At-Risk of Homelessness	n/a	n/a

\*If client ops for a Housing Choice Voucher, these services would decrease to a lower level.

\*\*Optional Tenant Based Voucher available after 1 year depending on voucher availability

\*\*\*Project may also expire after a time limit with possible option to transfer to HCV.

## *Income Information*

In the section on income information, the assessment requests information about the client's percentage of the Average Median Income (AMI). These numbers are determined by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) each year. The assessment has a helpful reference, with current Sacramento County AMI's listed for different household sizes. Many programs have eligibility restrictions based on the client's AMI – serving people who are making significantly less than the average household. This is what these numbers are used for. For more detailed information, please visit the [HUD webpage on Income Limits](#).

## *Housing Eligibility Requirements*

There are a lot of diverse questions on this assessment. When the SSF CAS team is reviewing an assessment to see if there are any housing opportunities available for your client, they are looking at many different housing programs, all of which have their own criteria, focus, and restrictions. The organizations in our CoC who run housing programs decide what these restrictions are – SSF has no control over these restrictions. There are several warning boxes throughout this assessment to explain why you need to enter this information about your clients and their households.