

Client Eligibility Identification

Purpose

This resource was designed to help organizations effectively assess client eligibility for Housing First services that are funded under the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS).

If delivering a Housing First under HPS funding:

- Review HPS definitions of homelessness, including chronic and episodic homelessness
- Confirm other inclusionary and exclusionary criteria for HPS funding
- Use the assessment follow chart to consider all factors of eligibility for clients, including communicating to them the possibility that they will be found to be ineligible
- Use the camera month tool and case study to practice identifying eligible clients
- It provides information on the key definitions associated with eligibility and details on key inclusionary or exclusionary criteria

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HPS Housing First Criteria

HPS Housing First funding has specific criteria for client eligibility. Only clients meeting this eligibility criteria can be served with funding under HPS Housing First. The first criteria that is defined by HPS Housing First is homelessness classification.

Homelessness Classification

HPS Housing First funding must be used to support those who are chronically and episodically homeless. These can be defined as follows.

Homeless

Individuals who do not have a place of their own where they could expect to stay for more than 30 days and for which they paid rent.

Chronically Homeless

Individuals, often with disabling conditions (e.g. chronic physical or mental illness, substance abuse problems), who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year (i.e., have spent more than 180 cumulative nights in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation).

Episodically Homeless

Individuals, often with disabling conditions, who are currently homeless and have experienced three or more episodes of homelessness in the past year (of note, episodes are defined as periods when a person would be in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation for a certain period, and after at least 30 days, would be back in the shelter or place).

It is important to contrast these definitions with those who are at imminent risk of homelessness. While these individuals can be supported under non-Housing First HPS funding, they cannot be supported under HPS Housing First funding.

At Imminent Risk of Homelessness

Individuals or families whose current housing situation ends in the near future (i.e. within one to two months) and for which no subsequent residence has been identified. They are unable to secure permanent housing because they do not have sufficient resources or support networks immediately available to prevent them from moving to an emergency shelter or a public or private place not meant for human habitation.



Housing Selection

Requires Provincial Assistance

Where permanent housing is contingent on accessing provincial assistance (e.g. disability benefits or provincial housing subsidy), HPS will support the connection as long as the client is confirmed as eligible for both HPS and provincial assistance at the outset, or before HPS will reimburse associated costs.

Housing Type

HPS Housing First agencies may only serve clients who chose locations where they can be permanently housed. This excludes clients who choose to be housed in temporary or transitional housing. There is one exception to this, as outlined below.

The HPS Housing First approach focuses on finding sustainable long-term permanent housing solutions for Housing First clients. However, in exceptional circumstances, providers may use interim housing to support their Housing First programs, with the assurance that the person will be placed in permanent housing. For example, during the client assessment phase, the community could place a client in interim housing until a permanent unit is available. In these cases, the Housing First client must only stay in such housing on a temporary basis (maximum of 3-4 months) until they are able to secure permanent housing. Confirmation of the Housing First client's placement in permanent housing is a requirement before HPS will reimburse associated costs.

Pre-existing Clients

HPS Housing First funds may also be used for Housing First clients that have been housed through Housing First programs before April 1 2014, and have a history of chronic and episodic homelessness. Note: although the services provided to existing Housing First clients count towards Housing First funding targets, these clients should not be included in outcome tracking for Results Reporting as they were Housing First clients prior to 2014.

Individuals who are already placed in transitional housing at the time of the implementation of a Housing First approach are not considered Housing First clients as these clients are considered to be housed. As such, HPS funding toward the clients already housed in transitional housing does not count toward reaching Housing First investment targets.

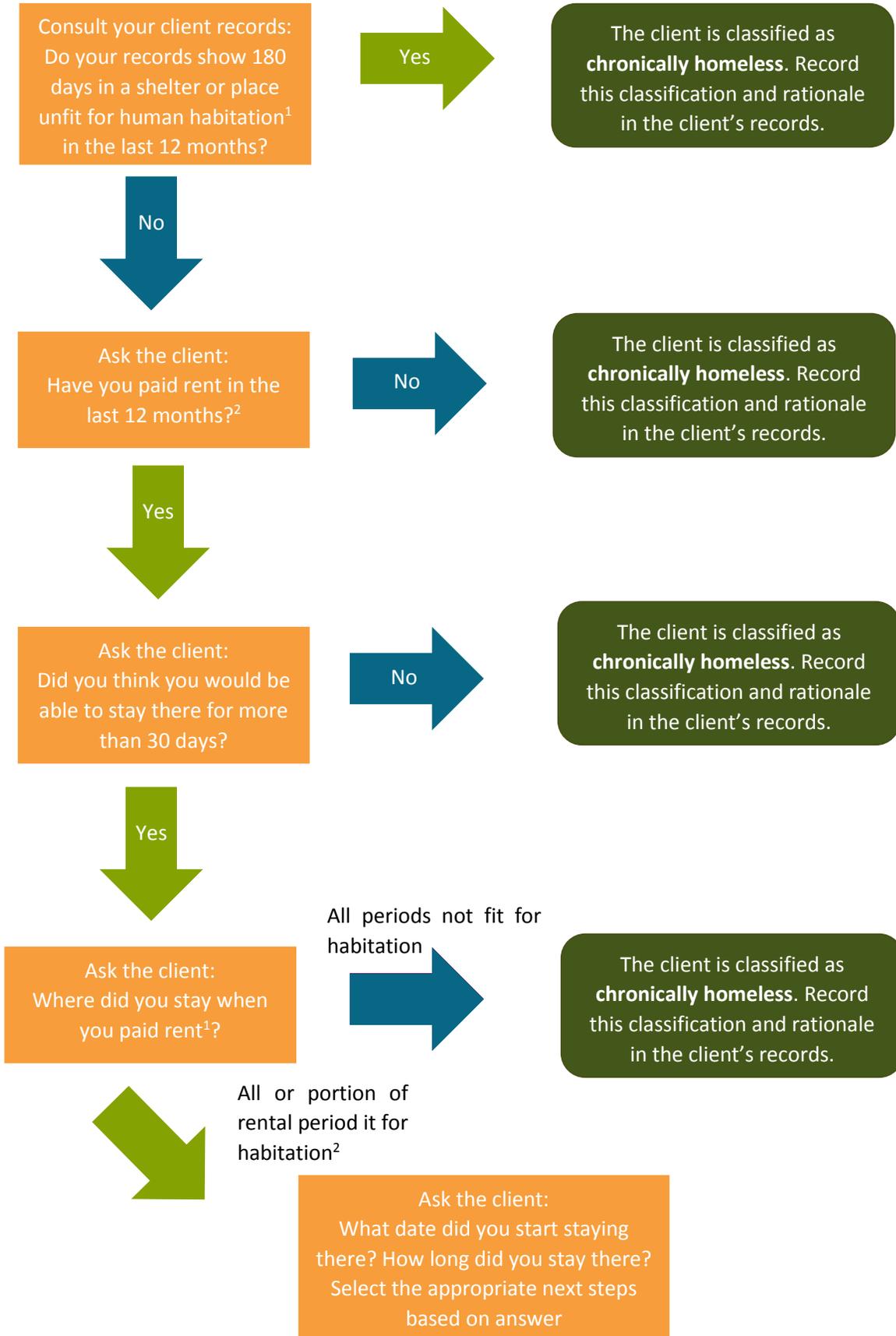
Rental Supplement Eligibility

Short term emergency housing funding is available for up to 4 months only in cases where the client is confirmed as eligible for HPS funding and long-term provincial housing assistance or disability benefits, and will be connected to the provincial system before the end of four months. These conditions must be met before HPS HF-funded agencies may claim reimbursement for emergency housing funding.

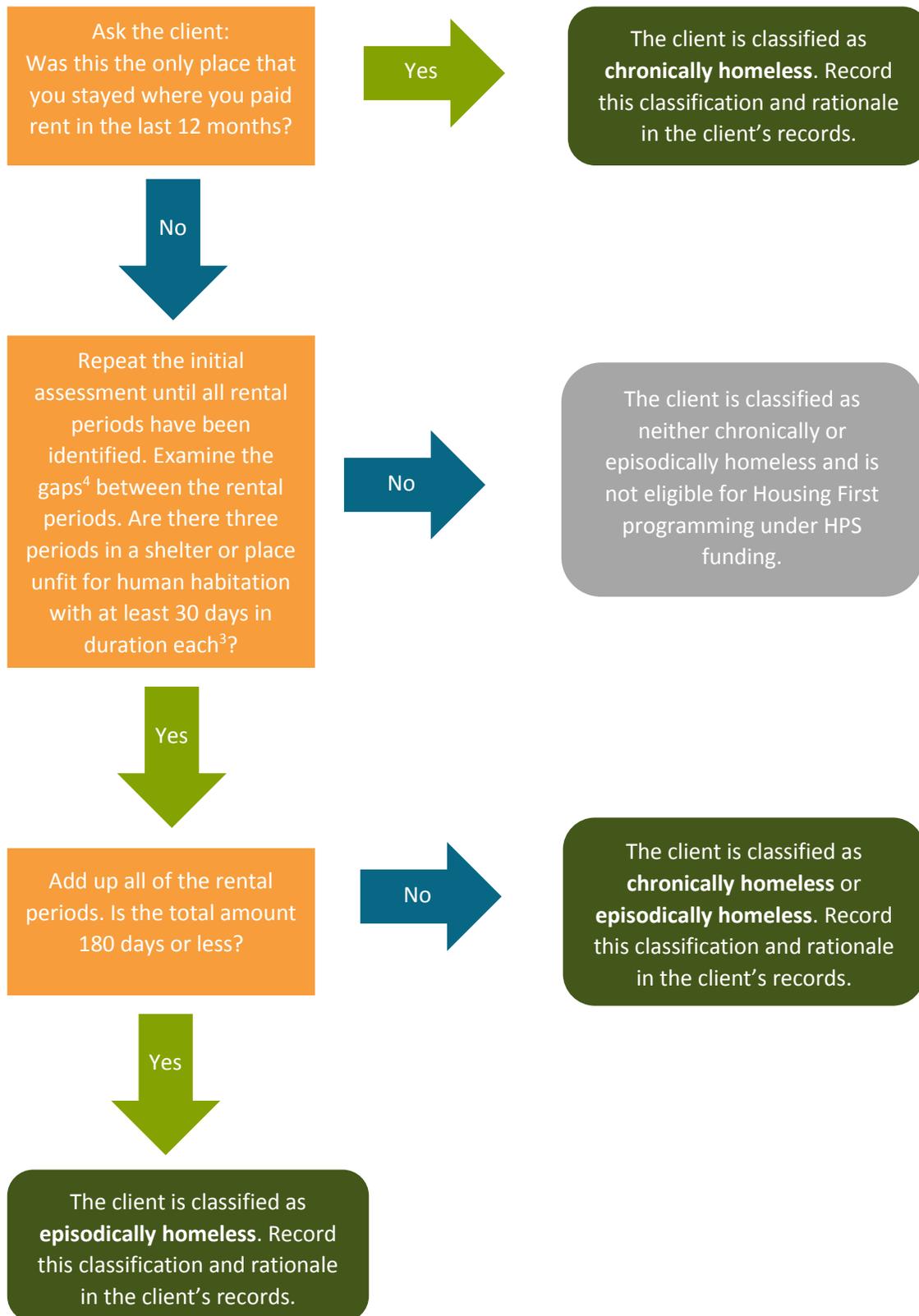


Assessment Tool

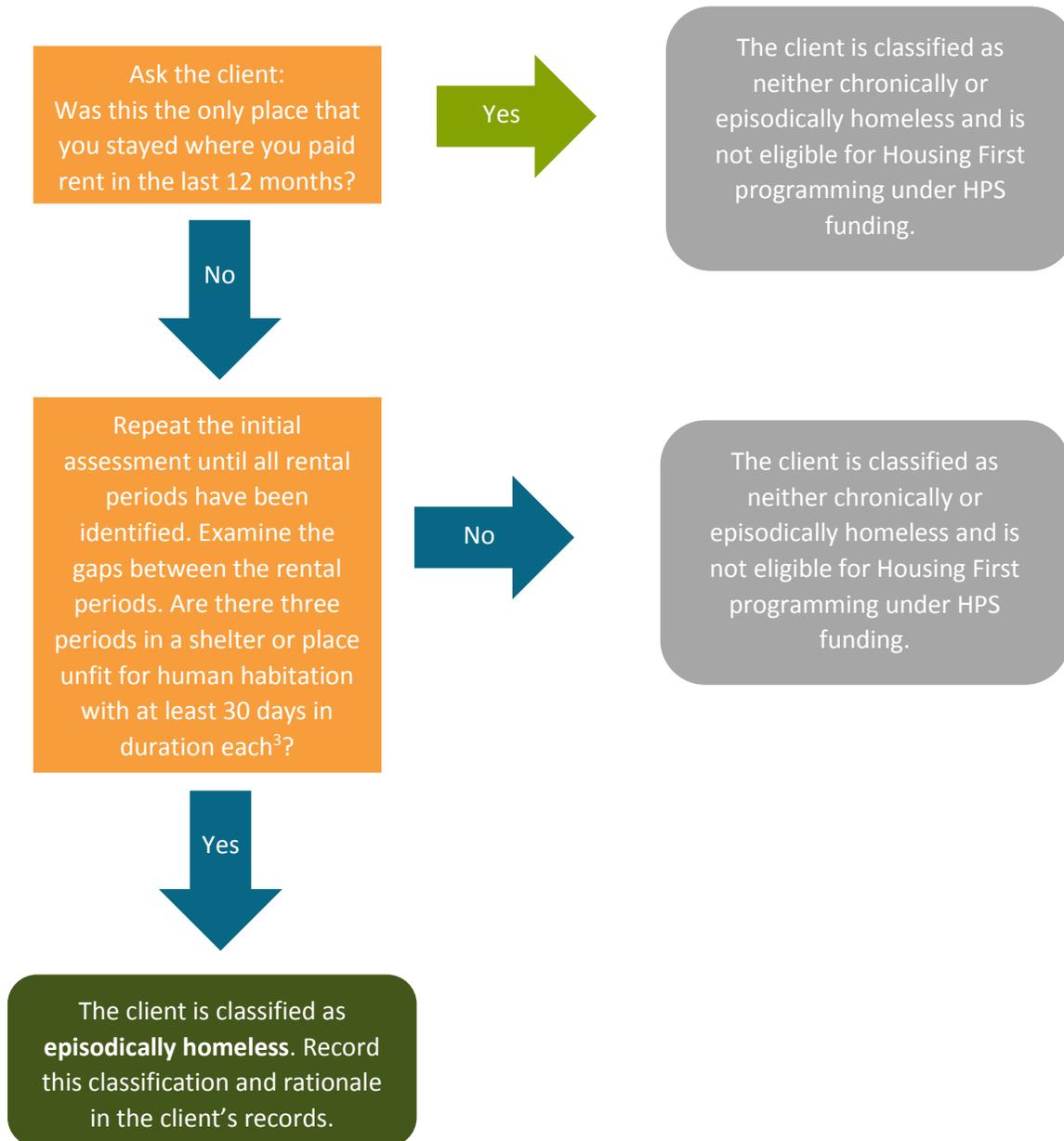
Initial Assessment



If the period of time that was fit for habitation was 180 days or less



If the period of time was fit for habitations was more than 6 months



Instructions to improve recall

A system that relies on the memory of an individual can often be inaccurate. As such, it is important to enhance the accuracy of their recall as much as possible. Memory can be enhanced by providing orienting cues that can help trigger recall.⁵

Use of key events/times

- Known periods of engagement with the organization
e.g. “You stayed with us in September, where did you go after that?”
- Key dates – birthday, holidays, etc
e.g. “Your birthday in June. Where were you staying when it was your birthday?”
- Links to other recalled events
e.g. “So you remember that you were in the hospital until the end of June. Where did you go after you left the hospital?”

Use of senses/experiences

- Utilizing senses to trigger recall.
e.g. “I want you to think about last winter. Try to imagine what this last winter was like – feel the cool wind that comes off the mountains; listen to the rain falling, or feel it fall on your skin; see the snow falling around you and look to see if the snow is sticking; imagine the smells that you notice in winter; how were you feeling during winter – were you happy, sad, angry, etc?” Then prompt the client to think about where they were staying at this time and go through ask where they were staying for each of the specific months.



Notes

1. Remind clients that they may not have paid the rent directly but that it may have come through Income Assistance, Persons with Disabilities or Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers payments or through rental supplements
2. Not fit for habitation means people living in public or private spaces without consent or contract and people living in places not intended for human habitation. [Canadian Homelessness Research Network. Canadian Definition of Homelessness. Homeless Hub] It includes
 - Public space, such as sidewalks, squares, parks, forests, etc.
 - Private space and vacant buildings (squatting)
 - Living in cars or other vehicles
 - Living in garages, attics, closets or buildings not designed for habitation
 - People in makeshift shelters, shacks or tents
3. If there are three gaps of one month each between rental periods, continue to answer 'yes' to this question if there are any additional gaps, regardless of their duration.
4. The time between the last rental period and the current date is considered a gap.
5. The theory of encoding specificity argues that the processes of creating and recalling memories are related. If the environment associated with creating the memory can be replicated at the time of recall, memory can be improved. [Tulving, E., Thomson, M. (1973). Encoding specificity and retrieval processes in episodic memory. *Psychological Review*. 80(5): 352-373.] At times, it is not possible to replicate the environment when the memory was created. An alternative is to use imagination to recreate a mental image of the environment to support memory recall.



Practice Case Studies

Assume that you are assessing all clients on January 1 and that all information list relates to the previous year. Assume that you have all of the information required to classify all clients. You can utilize the strip of months to help you view the rental periods. How would you classify each of the following clients?

1. According to your records, Cesar stayed at your shelter from June 30 to August 15. Your records say that he stayed at Craig Road Shelter before arriving at your shelter and that he moved to the Nellis Shelter after he stayed at your shelter. He says that he stayed at Craig Road for about two weeks and he stayed at the Nellis for just over two months. Cesar has never applied for Income Assistance or any other provincial income support, he's never received a rent supplement from any organization and he hasn't done any paid work for more than 6 months.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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2. Your records indicate that you met Lauren on April 4, at which time she was homeless. You worked with her until June 1, when she moved into her own place. She was receiving Income Assistance and you provided her with a rent supplement for 5 months until she said she was able to cover the rent herself. Lauren says that she lost her place about two weeks ago.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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3. Mickey says that he's been homeless all his life. However, in February he found a place and had it until the end of June when it wasn't working out and he decided that because the weather was warm enough he could just stay outside. When it started to get colder he began working with Summerlin Housing Group. They moved him into their transitional housing program on August 5 but he only stayed two months and then left.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Note: If considering using the calendar line for actual use, the list of the months would be adjusted to reflect the previous 12 months from the current date.

1. Chronic – has not paid rent in the last 12 months
2. Neither – has been housed for more than 180 days cumulative and does not have three 30 day periods of homelessness
3. Episodic – three 30 day periods of homelessness: Jan; Jul; Oct to Dec