



Itasca County  
Health and Human Services  
Housing Support Program

Provider Manual

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# Housing Support Contacts

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## Itasca County Health and Human Services Contacts

Name	Title	Contact Information	Housing Support Role
Jason Johnson	Income Maintenance Supervisor	P: 218-327-6136 jason.johnson@co.itasca.mn.us	Primary Provider Contact /Program Oversight
Christine Krebs	Business Division Manager	P: 218-327-6152 christine.krebs@co.itasca.mn.us	Program oversight
Cindy Bergman	Accounting Technician	P: 218-327-6170 cindy.bergman@co.itasca.mn.us	HS Agreements & Payments
Craig Pierce	Social Worker/Mental Health Coordinator	P: 218-327-6147 craig.pierce@co.itasca.mn.us	HS Program Inspection Coordinator
Mary Berard	Financial Eligibility Specialist	P: 218-327-5594 mary.berard@co.itasca.mn.us	Client & Eligibility Questions

General Housing Support program questions can be sent to: [Housing.Support@co.itasca.mn.us](mailto:Housing.Support@co.itasca.mn.us).

## Additional Helpful Contacts

Name	Location	Contact Information
Kootasca Community Action Housing Resource Specialist	201 NW 4 <sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 130 Grand Rapids MN	P: 218-999-0800 P: 877-687-1163
Northland Counseling Center Housing Resource Specialist	215 SE 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ave Grand Rapids MN	P: 218-327-1105 P: 800-626-0377
Legal Aid of Service of Northeastern Minnesota – Grand Rapids Office	350 NW 1 <sup>st</sup> Ave Suite F Grand Rapids MN	P: 218-322-6020
Volunteer Attorney Program Duluth MN	314 W Superior Street, Suite 100 Duluth, MN 55802 (Intake open 9 am - 12 pm Monday-Friday)	P: 218-723-4005 P: 888-529-2431
MN Attorney General Landlord/Tenant Rights	445 Minnesota Street, Suite 1400 St Paul MN 55101	P: 651-296-3353 P: 800-657-3787

## State Licensure and Enrollment Resources

Resource	Contact Information	Website
Minnesota Health Care Provider Enrollment	P: 651-431-2700 or 800-366-5411	<a href="https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/contact-us/minnesota-health-care-programs/providers/">https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/contact-us/minnesota-health-care-programs/providers/</a>
Minnesota Department of Human Services Licensing		<a href="https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/licensing/">https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/licensing/</a>
Minnesota Department of Human Services Housing Assistance Programs	P: 651-431-3941	<a href="https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/seniors/economic-assistance/housing/contact-us/">https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/seniors/economic-assistance/housing/contact-us/</a>
Minnesota Department of Human Services Information Desk	P: 651-431-2000	

## Definitions

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**Client** – a person served by or utilizing the services of a social agency.

**Corrective order** – may be issued for first-time or minor violations of ICHHS expectations or Housing Support Agreement

**Direct contact** – providing face-to-face care, training, supervision, counseling, consultation, or medication assistance with individuals, or who have unsupervised access to individuals, their personal property, or their private data

**File audit** - an event wherein a representative of ICHHS reviews documentation to ensure compliance with provider documentation requirements

**Program improvement plan** – issued and implemented when a service provider is found to have accrued more than one corrective order within six months' time or is found to have egregiously violated Housing Support policy or procedure

**Provider** – an entity that receives the Housing Support payment and is responsible for collecting the participants' obligation toward the Housing Support amount when applicable and making sure the Housing Support funding is paid toward its intended purposes (i.e. rent, utilities, and services). Provider is also the entity that provides supplemental services, if applicable.

**Site visit** – an event wherein a representative of ICHHS completes an inspection of the physical premises, and may interview individuals residing at the premises, to ensure compliance with provider requirements

Additional relevant definitions may be found in the Minnesota Housing Support [Statute 256I.03](#)

# Itasca County Health & Human Services Minnesota Housing Support Program

## Introduction

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Housing Support is a state-funded program that provides a monthly income supplement to pay for room and board for seniors and adults with disabilities who have low income. The program aims to prevent or reduce homelessness and institutionalization. The amount of a Housing Support payment is based on a federal and state standard of what an individual would need, at a minimum, to live in the community. In some cases, Housing Support may pay a supplemental amount to the basic rate. Licensed or registered settings that can qualify for a Housing Support Agreement can include adult foster care homes, boarding and lodging, supervised living settings, non-certified boarding care homes, housing with additional services establishments and other assisted living, and supportive housing and long-term homeless supportive housing.

County Human Service Departments are responsible for the evaluation of all Housing Support Agreements. Providers will also work with the financial assistance department, to facilitate the payments for eligible Housing Support participants. Depending on the type of setting, providers will need to secure all needed State of Minnesota (Department of Human Services and Department of Health) licensing/registrations prior to the approval of a Housing Support Agreement. The providers will also need to secure all needed licensing, variances and inspection certifications required by the local city/township where the facility is located.

This guide is for existing Housing Support providers and providers who are interested in pursuing Housing Support funding. Within the guide you will find the steps necessary to obtain a Housing Support agreement and expectations that come along with the Housing Support agreement.

Before the funds may be used, the participant, the living situation, & provider must meet statutory eligibility requirements.

- Provider eligibility for Housing Support funding is determined by the county.
- Participant eligibility is determined by county financial assistance department and is based on income, assets and disability.

For more information visit the [Housing Support section](#) of the DHS website and the Minnesota Revisor website for [Housing Support State Statute](#).

# Housing Support Rates

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The following provides information on Housing Support rates. Housing Support is a payment directly to the provider of housing on behalf of the eligible person.

## Room and Board Rate

The Housing Support Rate is based on a federal and state standard of what an individual would need, at a minimum, to live in the community. It is automatically adjusted each year based on changes made in the Federal Benefit Rate (FBR) of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program and changes in the value of food support for an individual.

Housing Support room and board payments are made directly to the provider of housing on behalf of the eligible person. Providers in many different types of housing may enter into a Housing Support agreement with their county, including adult foster care (family and corporate), board and lodging establishments, non-certified boarding care homes, and registered housing with services establishments.

## Supplemental Service Rate

The supplemental service rate can only be paid in specific types of settings:

- Board and lodge with special services
- Supervised living facilities
- Boarding care homes that are not certified for Medicaid
- Registered housing with services establishments
- Long-term homeless supportive housing
- Tribe-certified housing

Effective July 1, 2013, the supplemental service rate is \$482.84. Counties negotiate the supplemental service rate with providers and cannot exceed the maximum unless the county agrees to pay the amount over the maximum with county funds, or the Legislature has specifically authorized a higher rate for a facility. These providers typically serve clients who have mental illness or substance use disorder and are not eligible for home and community based waiver services.

## Difficulty of Care

The maximum payment for the Difficulty of Care (DOC) for individuals in adult foster care equals the maximum standard for the Housing Support Supplemental Service Rate (\$482.84). Eligibility criteria is determined by the county. Individuals are not eligible for difficulty of care payments if services are eligible under home and community based waiver programs.

Updated information for providers about Housing Support rates is available on the MN DHS [Housing Support Payment Rates page](#).

## Guidelines for All Housing Support Programs

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Although each Housing Support program is unique, they all share some common components.

### Program Requirements

- The “Housing Support Rate” or the “Housing Rate” is to be used for shelter, fuel, food, utilities, household supplies, and other costs necessary to provide room and board. Examples of these expenses may include: toilet paper, bed linens, shampoo, toothpaste, garbage bags, etc.
- A portion of the “Housing Rate” must be spent each month on food for each participant. The amount required to be spent on food may or may not change each year on July 1. This amount is based on determinations of the Federal Food Support Programs (SNAP). The provider must inform individuals they are eligible for SNAP upon discharge from the Housing Support facility and/or program. Providers may be required to provide documentation to prove food purchase that meet SNAP requirements.
- Provider must maintain all necessary licenses through the appropriate licensing authority.
- Provide a list of residency requirements that include violations that could result in eviction.
- Background checks are required for all employees/volunteers who have direct contact (face-to-face care, training, supervision, counseling, or medication assistance) with recipients, or who have unsupervised access to recipients, their personal property, or their private data.
- All staff members who have direct contact with recipients must have skills and knowledge acquired through one or more of the following:
  - A course of study in a health or human services-related field leading to a bachelor of arts, bachelor of science, or associate’s degree;
  - One year experience with the target population served (can include being a member of the target population served);
  - Experience as a Minnesota Department of Human Services certified peer specialist.
  - Meets requirements of unlicensed personnel under Minnesota Statutes sections [144A.43](#) to [144A.483](#)

- Provider and staff are required to complete training on vulnerable adults mandated reporting and child maltreatment mandated reporting, where applicable, and to complete housing support orientation training by MN DHS.
- Staff are required to have valid driver's license if transporting participants.
- The agreement can be terminated in writing by DHS, Itasca County, or the provider, with or without cause, with two calendar months prior notice.
- Minnesota Department of Human Services has the right to suspend or terminate the Housing Support agreement immediately when it is determined the health or welfare of the housing or service recipients is endangered, or when there is reasonable cause to believe that the provider has breached a material term of the agreement.

### Individual Eligibility

Determined by the County Financial Assistance Department the participant resides in.

- Must be 18 and older and disabled or elderly.
- Must meet a basis of eligibility for General Assistance (GA) or Social Security Insurance (SSI).
- Countable income: must be less than maximum benefit.
- Countable assets: must be within the asset limit for the program.
- Individual may have to complete a Combined Application Form (CAF) to apply for the program.

## Housing Support Settings

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Eligible Housing Support settings include:

### **Adult Foster Care (Family and Community Residential Setting):**

Adult Foster Care (AFC) is a type of housing for people with disabilities and seniors who need some daily care. Some caregivers own and live in the homes they provide care in, which is referred to as Family Adult Foster Care. While others are employees paid to work in the home, which is referred to as a Community Residential Setting (CRS).

AFC/CRS homes house one to five adults with disabilities and seniors who live together, typically each with their own bedroom. The living room, bathrooms, kitchen, and any other rooms are often shared. Housing Support may pay up to the full cost of room, board, and services, depending on the participant's income, eligibility for a AFC-Difficulty of Care rating or eligibility for MA-Waiver programs. Services provided to individuals may also include the delivery of personal care, household and living skills assistance or training, medication assistance and assistance safeguarding cash resources.



**Housing with Services Establishments:**

Housing with services establishments provide sleeping accommodations to one or more adult residents, and offer one or more regularly scheduled health-related services, or two or more regularly scheduled supportive services. Supportive services can be offered or provided directly by the establishment or by another entity arranged for by the establishment. Housing with Services Establishments can function as assisted living, customized living settings, or support participants to live independently in the community.

**Board and Lodge:**

Board and Lodging establishments are licensed, congregate settings that offer a room (often shared) and three meals a day to eligible adults and, occasionally, families. Board and Lodges can vary in size, with five or more people living together. Some settings are short-term, time-limited; others may be supportive housing with no specific time limit. Board and Lodges can require participation in skills training or other programming; others have no service requirements. Each Board and Lodge setting can look very different.

**Supportive Housing:**

Supportive Housing includes independent apartment units or shared housing where residents have their own rental leases, have the option to prepare their own food, and get supportive services, like getting a unit set up with furniture and household supplies, employment services, or health-related services, like help to prepare and administer medications. Supportive Housing could have several units in one location or could be scattered throughout the community in individual units. Most Supportive Housing programs are for people who have experienced long-term homelessness.

## New Providers and Programs

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### New Provider Proposal Requirements

Entities who are interested in providing new or expanded Housing Support services in Itasca County must submit an application to Itasca County Health and Human Services (ICHHS). At a minimum, provider applications will consist of the following:

- Demonstrated need for the program, including how it will address gaps in existing services for Itasca County residents;
- Proposed business model related to facility and services;
- Proposed location(s) of services and licensure(s) required, including interior and exterior photos of proposed location(s);
- Target population and number of people the program proposes to serve;

- Provider knowledge, skills, and experience related to serving the proposed target population, including experience providing support or services to people with disabling conditions, who are low income, or homeless;
- How the program will integrate Evidence-Based Practices, including Person-Centered, Housing First, Harm Reduction, and Trauma-Informed Care models in order to serve individuals with high barriers and high needs, and
- Sustainability plan addressing how provider will remain financially stable during periods of time when the facility is not fully occupied.

## Proposal Review

ICHHS internal Housing Support Committee, consisting of representatives from Social Services, Accounting, Public Health, and Financial Assistance, will review provider applications and determine if the proposed program(s) meets requirements and addresses identified needs to serve Itasca County residents who have disabling conditions, who are low income, and/or are experiencing homelessness.

The Housing Support Committee will follow up with all applicants after review to notify them if their proposals were supported. Providers whose proposals are supported must complete the following steps prior to approval:

- Presentation to the ICHHS Housing Support Committee (includes program overview, program leadership and staff qualifications/experience, program overview of care to be provided to participants). Providers are encouraged to bring business partners and staff to this presentation.
- Site visit of proposed program location(s)
- Housing Support inspection of program location(s) – Provider must contact KOOTASCA Community Action or another entity approved by ICHHS to conduct the inspection. Provider is responsible for the full cost of the inspection. Documentation of inspection must be submitted to the ICHHS contact person.
- Background checks for all staff with direct-contact with clients per DHS licensing requirements.

Final approval of proposals will be determined upon completion of the above activities. The ICHHS Housing Support Committee will forward all approved proposals to the ICHHS Accounting Department's Housing Support Provider Agreement Contact personnel to coordinate with the provider the collection of all required documentation for provider agreement(s).

## Housing Support Agreement Application

If ICHHS and the potential provider agree to move forward, the Housing Support Agreement Application must be completed to start the contracting process. Providers must:

1. Obtain appropriate insurance;
  - a. Ensure sufficient Liability and Workers Compensation Insurance is in place meeting the levels indicated in the Itasca County Insurance Policy. Documentation proving Workers' Compensation Insurance coverage is required if the provider employs staff to assist in the provision of services.
2. Contact the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and/or Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to obtain proper licensing, as required for each type of Housing Support provided.
3. Complete required online trainings through DHS: Housing Support Orientation and Vulnerable Adult Mandated Reporting.
  - a. Providers must attach certificates of completion/email certifying attendance for both trainings.
4. Complete background checks on all providers, staff, volunteers, or anyone who has direct or unsupervised contact with Housing Support recipients and/or as defined in the Housing Support Agreement.
  - a. Receipts indicating submission of background check requests must be included with the Housing Support Agreement Application.
  - b. Clearance notices are required prior to approval of a Housing Support Program.
5. Submit completed Housing Support Agreement Application document with required documents to ICHHS.
  - a. ICHHS ensures all required documents are completed accurately and completely.
6. Upon approval from ICHHS, sign Housing Support Agreement and Insurance/Indemnity Agreement.

## Housing and Referrals

Once all agreements are signed, the provider must be set up in the applicable payment systems including Provider Enrollment for Supplemental Service Rate payments, before advertising openings and accepting referrals. Providers must:

1. Locate housing which matches the services/population to be served as noted in the approved proposal;
2. If Rate 2 is authorized, contact MN DHS Provider Enrollment to become an Enrolled Provider. This needs to be in place in order to receive Housing Support

Supplemental Services payments (SSR). Note that you will need to have a generic Housing Support Agreement in place in order to obtain a [National Provider Identifier](#) (NPI) with DHS' Provider Enrollment.

- a. As of July 1, 2016, all SSR service providers are required to enroll with Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP). Enrollment is required so MHCP can issue providers a MN-ITS account so providers can bill for supplemental services.
  - b. MHCP provides a Billing Lab for Housing Support supplemental service providers. We encourage these providers to attend a billing lab to learn:
    - i. How to navigate through the information on the website; o Who and where to call if there are questions;
    - ii. The resources available to providers if they need assistance; o
    - iii. To understand and use all features of the MN-ITS account including:
      1. Receiving authorization letters;
      2. Receiving notifications and communications;
      3. Submitting claims; and
      4. Receiving a remittance advice
    - iv. To understand and read the claim numbers and remittance adviceThe information about the in-person lab or webinar sessions are available on the [MHCP Enrolled Provider Training page](#). Register for the Billing Lab for Housing Support Supplemental Service providers.
  - c. If you have any questions about your enrollment application or need assistance registering for a Billing Lab, please contact the Provider Call Center at 651-431- 2700 or 800-366-5411.
3. Submit the proposed house/facility rules/residency restrictions that may result in eviction which will be used and submit those to ICHHS.
  4. Complete the Residential Informational forms and submit to ICHHS.
  5. Upon approval from ICHHS, a Vendor Profile Form is completed by ICHHS and the provider set up in applicable Housing Support payment systems.

Once approved, and set up in applicable payment systems, providers may start accepting new referrals for housing and services.

Providing safe, dignified, person-centered, quality services to program participants is of the utmost importance to ICHHS. With this in mind, if during the course of service provision, a Housing Support recipient experiences an adverse event (involving serious injury, death, or an overdose), this must be reported to the ICHHS within 24 hours by phone or e-mail in addition to completing an Adult Protection report. Additionally, if an agency receives a substantiated finding of maltreatment from an oversight agency, such as the Office of Facility Health Complaints, the agency must notify the ICHHS within 24 hours by phone or e-mail.

# Provider Monitoring

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Itasca County Health and Human Services (ICHHS) will complete systematic provider reviews to ensure minimum standards for quality assurance are satisfied or exceeded.

## **Procedure:**

1. Following initial Housing Support Agreement, providers must:
  - a. Complete all Housing Support Program training required;
  - b. Comply with all site visits and/or file audits as required by ICHHS which consistently demonstrate:
    - i. Complete provider documentation;
    - ii. Complete participant documentation;
    - iii. Safe, clean, and healthy housing units;
    - iv. Following state and county standards, policies, and procedures as set forth in the Provider Manual;
    - v. Timely response to documentation requests from ICHHS, which is considered, at a maximum, fifteen business days.
2. ICHHS will complete annual reviews of all providers prior to annual recertification of Housing Support agreements. This process applies to all Housing Support providers in Itasca County, including those licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. As part of annual reviews, providers are required to verify the following minimum requirements in the agreement:
  - a. Current license or registration, including authorization if managing or monitoring medications;
  - b. All staff who have direct contact with recipients meet the staff qualifications outlined in the [Minnesota Housing Support Statute 256I](#);
  - c. The provision of housing support and supplementary services (if applicable);
  - d. Reports of adverse events, including recipient death or serious injury. Providers must submit paperwork to ICHHS attesting to any incidents or complaints since their last Housing Support agreement was approved;
  - e. Submission of residency requirements that could result in recipient eviction, and
  - f. Confirmation that the provider will not limit or restrict the number of hours an applicant or recipient chooses to be employed.
3. ICHHS will issue an annual recertification checklist that must be completed and submitted by providers by the identified deadline.
  - a. Providers are required to complete Housing Support inspections of all program location(s) every two (2) years or as determined necessary by ICHHS. ICHHS will coordinate with KOOTASCA Community Action, or another entity approved by ICHHS, to schedule inspections with providers. Provider is responsible for the full cost of the inspection. If the provider does not allow access to the site or misses their scheduled inspection

appointment, they may be liable for the costs of the missed appointment.

Documentation of inspection and receipt of payment to Itasca County for the inspection must be submitted to ICHHS by identified deadline.

4. ICHHS will do site visits with providers every two years or as determined necessary to promote safe, quality housing and services to recipients. Providers are required to comply with all requests for site visits;
5. ICHHS Housing Support Committee will review recertification documentation and compliance with required action items to determine if providers are eligible for recertification.
6. If ICHHS identifies that a provider did not submit all necessary documentation and/or does not meet requirements for recertification, a provider improvement plan (PIP) may be issued.
  - a. PIPs will include notice of required corrections and a deadline to submit proof of compliance.
  - b. If corrections are not made and/or requested documentation is not provided by the identified deadline, ICHHS may choose not to renew Housing Support agreements and/or terminate existing agreements.
7. ICHHS will send a list of providers identified as meeting all requirements for recertification to the ICHHS Business Division Manager for approval and signature. A list of providers with signed Housing Support agreements is provided to the Itasca County Board of Commissioners annually for final approval.

## Housing Support Agreement Renewal

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Housing Support Agreements are renewed annually on or before July 1 when the rate changes occur. A representative from Itasca County Health and Human Services (ICHHS) will send an updated Housing Support Agreement to existing providers prior to the rate change. ICHHS will verify that the Housing Support provider is in compliance with all the terms of the Housing Support Agreement and all expectations outlined in the Housing Support Provider Manual prior to an updated agreement being approved.

### **Compliance:**

1. Training: Providers must complete provider training as required by ICHHS prior to receiving approval to renew their Agreement. If a provider does not attend training prior to the identified deadline, they must provide reason for non-attendance to ICHHS. ICHHS may determine that the Agreement will be provisionally approved, and the provider must complete training no later than August 1<sup>st</sup> to avoid deactivation.
2. Housing Support Agreements/Provider Expectations: If a provider is not in compliance with all necessary procedures for the Agreement and following the new housing program expectations and procedures, the provider will be given a

PIP (Performance Improvement Plan). Providers will have 30 days to comply and could be given an appeal process. If the provider does not comply within that time period or make an appeal, the provider may be deactivated until they are compliant.

3. **Provider Overpayments:** Providers must submit payment for any overpayments owed to the County/State. Providers who still owe overpayments on the Agreement renewal deadline will be given 60 days to pay off their balance before being deactivated. *ICHHS will work with providers on a case-by-case basis to develop individual payment plans if they make a request for payment agreement.*
4. **Reactivating a Deactivated Provider:** A deactivated provider can be reactivated once they have met all of the requirements for the Housing Support Agreement. Payment to the reactivated provider will only go back to the date they became compliant, not back to the date that they were originally deactivated.

## Termination of Housing Support Agreements

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Itasca County Health and Human Services (ICHHS) or providers may elect to terminate Housing Support Agreements by providing the other party with two calendar months' written notice, with or without cause.

### **Procedure:**

1. Providers seeking to terminate the Housing Support Agreement must provide written notification to ICHHS at least two calendar months' prior to ending services. Alternatively, if ICHHS elects to terminate a Housing Support Agreement, ICHHS must provide written notification to the provider at least two calendar months in advance. ICHHS may determine that immediate termination of a Housing Support Agreement is necessary to prevent imminent danger to human life. ICHHS will coordinate with DHS and appropriate legal parties if immediate termination is deemed necessary.
2. In the event a Housing Support Agreement is terminated, ICHHS and the provider will collaborate to ensure that current recipients transition to alternative housing and services.
3. Providers are responsible for ensuring people currently residing in their programs receive at a minimum (unless otherwise requested by the recipient):
  - a. Referral(s) to other housing and services that align with the needs/choices of the recipient. This may include referrals to other Housing Support programs, Housing Stabilization Services, or Coordinated Entry.
  - b. An updated housing plan for the recipient to take with them upon discharge, including information about SNAP eligibility, agencies to assist with basic needs or housing crises, and other maintenance benefits requirements and case management.