Helping ALTSA Clients Discharge from Institution Settings
and Assisting them with Community-based Transitions

As a community choice guide (CCG) contractor, you may be asked by an HCS or AAA Case Manager to assist their ALTSA clients discharge from an institutional setting into independent housing, or to assist an ALTSA client transition from one community settings to another.

In either event, it will be helpful for you to have some knowledge about affordable low-income housing, landlord tenant laws, and fair housing rules/regulations – especially those rules designed to protect disabled people.

You also need to know:

- How to conduct a housing search
- The basics of completing and submitting housing applications
- How to work with low-income housing providers and public housing agencies (PHA)
- How to calculate client rent in a PHA briefing session
- How to navigate subsidized housing options for ALTSA clientele
- What to look for on housing lease agreements
- When to submit a reasonable accommodation request
- How to assist clients and landlords with Requests for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) paperwork
- What to do when all of your hard work gets declined by a landlord

Before you concern yourself with anything "housing related", as contracted CCG, be sure you fully understand the scope of work (refer to the sustainability screen from CARE and the DSHS consent form) that the case manager has authorized and is asking you to perform.

Housing Search:

Prior to conducting a housing search, you should complete a housing intake/assessment with the client to better understand the housing needs and wants of the individual. For example, how many bedrooms does s/he need, can s/he climb stairs, where does s/he want to live, does s/he have a pet, etc. – see attached sample housing intake and assessment form.

In the process of discussing the housing intake and assessment with the client, you may determine that you need to conduct a full background screening to better understand the client and to discover any barriers that may arise to find suitable housing. If the background screening is not in the scope of work provided by the case manager, then be sure to discuss this process with them in advance of ordering a background report. www.myscreeningreport.com is the most recognized background screening report in the greater Spokane area.

There are multiple online housing search tools. However www.housingsearchnw.org and www.padmapper.com are two online search tools that provide "real-time" housing vacancy (availability) information. There are also numerous weekly publications that provide housing information – make yourself familiar with all of these search tools.

How to Calculate or Estimate Client Rent – (TBRA – Tenant-based rental assistance)

If you are assisting an ALTSA client who has applied for tenant-based rental assistance (housing choice voucher- section 8, NED, HOPWA, etc.), be prepared to attend a "briefing session" with the client (ALTSA/SHA Memorandum of Understanding).

Briefing sessions are hosted by the public housing authority. They are mandatory meetings. Any person/household that applies, and is screened and found eligible for rent assistance – must attend a briefing session. Think of it as an orientation meeting. Vouchers are issued, voucher payments standards are established, tenant rent is calculated, and housing search tips are provided.

Refer to rent calculation template.

Briefing sessions generally run 2+ hours. Many important housing documents are issued and explained, including the Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) paperwork. RFTA paperwork always accompanies tenant-based rental assistance housing choice vouchers issued through housing authorities.