**Michigan Balance of State Continuum of Care (MIBOSCOC)**

**Emergency Shelter 211 After-hours Policy and Procedures**

Draft 9.1.22

After HARA Sub-committee review

**Emergency Shelter 211 After-Hours Policy**

The purpose of the Emergency Shelter 211 After-Hours Policy is to offer after-hours support to MIBOSCOC Housing Assistance Resource Agencies (HARAs) throughout all 61 counties. This policy will help guide 211 Call Specialists at all Michigan 211 partner Call Centers on how to screen callers when HARAs are closed to identify the need for emergency shelter placement in a physical shelter or motel, and the steps to take in order to provide that service to those who qualify.

**The goal of this collaboration is to provide assistance to people seeking shelter 24/7. 211 has the capacity to provide that service outside of usual business hours for the MIBOSCOC homelessness Coordinated Entry systems.**

211 Call Specialists who receive calls from households seeking shelter will follow the MIBOSCOC Emergency Shelter 211 After-Hours Procedures included in this document. These procedures will be reviewed annually by the MIBOSCOC Shelter Sub-Committee or whenever there is a major change in shelter Best Practices.

It is the intention of MIBOSCOC to be able to provide shelter to anyone who is Literally Homeless by HUD definition, but in the MIBOSCOC service area there may not be any physical shelters to offer to households calling 211. Although a physical shelter is the first option, when a physical shelter isn’t an option and there is local funding available, a motel may be offered until the next business day the HARA is open to work with the household.

It is the responsibility of the MIBOSCOC HARAs and grantees of Motel ESP or ESG funds to:

* Keep their local HARA/Coordinated Entry contact information up to date in the 211 database. This should be reviewed at least annually and whenever there is a change in local information or local Coordinated Entry procedures with their local 211 Resource staff.
* Identify local motels that will accept program rate payments from the grantees. A complete and consistently reviewed and updated listing of the motels must be entered into the 211 database. Those listings will include motel names and locations, phone numbers, email addresses, and if there are any limitations to communication with them (such as only having FAX available). If there are limitations listed, the HARA needs to provide instructions to 211 on how to navigate those limitations (such as asking 211 to notify a motel without email that the HARA will need a copy of the signed room registration to submit payment). Instructions for updating motel information in the 211 database can be found on the MIBOSCOC training site. (<http://www.miboscoc.com/training-site.html>)
* Keep the 211 database updated as to the funding availability for motel sheltering so that 211 does not issue a motel voucher when funding is not available. Instructions for those entries can be found on the MIBOSCOC training site. (<http://www.miboscoc.com/training-site.html>)
* Motel funded agencies are responsible for making sure the motel form includes a client signature before the next working day check out time. The agencies will receive the motel form from 211 as notification of someone having been referred to a motel. It is the agency’s responsibility to follow-up early the next working day.

There may be situations where a client receives a night or two of motel shelter through 211 although they are on a service agency list for abuse or overuse of the service or are not truly literally homeless. In an overuse of service, it is likely that in those circumstances the motel itself will refuse service to that client. Since there are no Releases of Information in place, those internal lists should not be shared with 211.

**Emergency Shelter 211 After-Hours Procedures**

Identify that the household is in need of emergency shelter. **The household would be eligible for the emergency motel voucher if they have no shelter for the night.** An uninhabitable place (like a vehicle for example) does not count as shelter.

Note from 211 Resource Staff meeting 12/1/22-Do we need to ask all of these questions if there is no shelter or motel funding available?

STEP 1: Determine eligibility:

This tool will guide 211 staff through a series of questions aimed at helping someone experiencing a housing crisis to work through other possible options before entering any shelter program. It is also possible that there are no shelters available on a given night, so this service of diverting them into another option may be critical.

Instructions for the person administering the tool are in **BLUE**

Are you safe and able to answer questions right now?

O YES O NO

* + If yes, proceed to next question
  + If no, tell them to call 911 or offer to call for them

Why are you seeking shelter?

* + fleeing Domestic Violence**. If yes, refer to local DV program**
  + living on the street
  + staying in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program and have to leave
  + Staying with friend/family and have to leave
  + Exiting an institution (jail, foster care) or healthcare facility and have nowhere to go

If the household cannot answer yes to any of these questions, refer them to other **mainstream resources (rental listings, Habitat, etc)** and to contact the HARA on the next business day if they are less than 2 weeks away from becoming literally homeless.

If the household does answer yes to ANY of these questions other than DV, go to Shelter Diversion questions.

Shelter Diversion Questions

Help the individual or family think through potential places – with family, friends, co-workers-they could stay instead of entering shelter or sleeping outside. Have them identify what barriers they think exist to staying somewhere other than shelter and how they might be overcome. Help them problem solve on their own crisis by asking them these thought-provoking questions:

What options have you tried other than seeking shelter tonight?

Do you have any other friends or relatives that might let you stay temporarily with them while we work on a permanent solution?

Is there someone far away that might let you stay with them if we can help you find resources to get there? If yes, look for transportation resources.

Have you been homeless before? How have you managed to stay housed when you weren’t homeless? If safe, could you try that again?

If they ARE able to go somewhere other than shelter, thank them and ask them to contact 211 again if their situation changes. Refer to any other available mainstream resources (Home Rental Listings, Habitat, etc).

If they are NOT ABLE to identify another option, and shelter diversion has been ruled out, go to STEP 2.

STEP 2: Determine shelter availability:

* Identify the county of the caller.
* Follow After-Hours procedures to direct the caller to any local physical homelessness shelters (Search “Community Shelters”).
* Instruct the caller to call back to 211 if there is no local physical shelter availability for them that night. (Note: some counties have no physical shelters. If that’s the case, go directly to STEP 3).

STEP 3: Motel vouchering process:

* + Motel vouchers may be available for singles and/or families. Vouchers are available for multiple rooms if needed, based on the size of the family and room availability. The number allowed in each room is based on motel policy.
  + Search “homeless motel vouchers” in the 211 database.
* If there is motel funding available, continue to the next bullet.
  + If there is no motel funding available, an unmet need should be recorded in the 211 database and the client should be told: “*Unfortunately, there aren’t any options for shelter or motel coverage in the area where you are now. Please contact your local HARA office (give them the number) during regular business hours to find out about any other available housing or sheltering options.”*
  + Contact the motel(s) listed in the 211 database record for room availability and to find out how they would like to receive the emergency shelter voucher paperwork (email, fax, etc.).
  + The record will also let you know which forms need to be filled out for each motel, and how to access the necessary forms that need to be sent when completed.
  + Be sure to fill out all the fields on the forms, explain the forms and release of information to the caller as necessary, note your initials and write that there was “verbal consent over the phone”.
  + Send a copy of the motel voucher form to the motel AND the HARA/provider contact email.
  + Be sure to make the motel aware that this is an emergency shelter voucher. **Make sure they know to get a signature from the client upon check-in.** The motel staff need to return the signed voucher to the HARA contact person prior to check out time.
  + Make sure to notify the caller that the motel coverage is only available until the next business day. The caller MUST follow-up with the HARA the next business day to make sure they receive all permanent housing solutions, or shelter stay extensions, available to them.
  + Record the caller’s information in the 211 Database with contact notes added.