

Client Intake and Case Management Resources

The documents provided below can assist you with the client intake and case management process. Keep in mind that the documents are samples and were developed with a broad array of needs and service delivery structures in mind. As a result, your organization might need some of the tools but not others. Additionally, the tools should be tailored to suit the specific needs of your organization and/or community.

- **Homeless Program Referral Guidelines**

These [sample referral guidelines](#) provide the basis for helping case managers determine the type of program to which a client should be referred.

- **Housing Assessment Template**

The purpose of this [Housing Assessment Template](#) is to gather detailed information from clients regarding their past and current living situations in order to identify barriers to housing stability and determine the most appropriate approach to housing placement.

- **Mainstream Resources Checklist**

Case managers can use this [Mainstream Resources Checklist](#) to help determine whether a client is receiving all the mainstream benefits for which he or she is eligible. To learn more about Federal mainstream benefit programs, including eligibility criteria and application procedures, case managers should visit the Department of Health and Human Services' [FirstStep](#) website.

- **Mutual Expectations Agreement**

This template for a [Mutual Expectations Agreement](#) provides clients with an overview of the housing search process, including what is expected of a client and what services your organization will provide.

- **Tenant Housing Services Contract**

This [Tenant Housing Services Contract](#) is more extensive than the Mutual Expectations Agreement and focuses solely on client responsibilities. It allows case managers to address problems that may have caused clients to lose their housing in the past, and it also allows case managers to be proactive about preventing housing loss in the future. Your agency may want to use both contracts, or you may wish to take certain elements from each and create a new contract that meets the unique needs and circumstances of both your agency and clientele.

- **Individual Service Plan**

An [Individual Service Plan](#) should be developed with clients soon after intake to identify the steps that must be taken to move them towards the goal of independent living. This document provides the basis for working with clients to establish goals, strategies for achieving goals, and target dates for achievement. The plan focuses on three areas for improvement: health and wellness, employment and financial stability, and housing stability.

- **Monthly Budget Worksheet**

Use this Excel [Monthly Budget Worksheet](#) to calculate a client's income and expenses. Helping clients prepare and stick to a budget will be essential to helping them obtain and maintain housing.

- **Credit Report Request**

Most landlords will request a credit report as a way of determining an applicant's ability to pay rent. Before referring your client to any landlords, and before paying an application fee, help your client request his/her credit report. [AnnualCreditReport.com](#) is a central site that allows individuals to request a free credit report once every 12 months from each of the nationwide consumer credit reporting companies: Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. Be sure to explain to clients that credit reports contain information about an individual's credit history - whether payments have been made on time, are late, or have been missed altogether - and that landlords use credit reports as a screening device. Once you receive the credit reports, review them with your client and discuss ways to address potential problems in his/her credit history. For more information, review the Better Business Bureau's tips on [interpreting a credit report](#) and Bankrate.com's tips for [repairing a poor credit history](#).

Tips for Repairing Credit History

Review the credit report with your client to identify any errors. (A recent study found that 25 percent of credit reports contained errors serious enough to cause consumers to be denied credit!) If the credit report shows late or outstanding payments, work with your client to make payment arrangements that fit within his or her budget. Have clients prepare and practice their explanations of how they have corrected their credit problems. Additionally, have clients obtain written copies of payment arrangements, which they can then share with potential landlords. If possible, designate funds within your program budget for the purpose of helping clients clean up credit problems. Clients can then make monthly payments to your organization at a rate at which they can afford.

- **A Guide to Tenant Education**

Many landlords may view your clients as a high risk and be unwilling to rent to them, especially if they have prior evictions, poor credit history, or a criminal record. However, a strong tenant education program can help address landlord concerns by providing participants with information on how to be good tenants. This [Guide to Tenant Education](#) page provides ideas for topics to cover and resources to use in developing a training workshop.

Select each resource and its embedded links above to learn more.