

**Kentucky Housing Corporation**  
**Safe Havens Program**  
**Special Needs Housing, Housing for Persons with Special Needs Description**

**Description**

Through the Safe Havens Program, Kentucky Housing Corporation (KHC) provides the first component of self-sufficiency by providing temporary housing assistance to households who are seeking to leave a shelter or who are otherwise in critical need of housing.

The initiative is composed of two specialized programs: Safe Place and Safe Start.

**Safe Place**

*Safe Place* provides housing vouchers to persons with serious and persistent mental illness. Through case management services provided by community mental health agencies, participants gain access to resources such as psychiatric support, food stamps, clothing banks, household furnishings and Social Security benefits. These services prepare participants for permanent housing ensuring a successful transition from homelessness.

**Safe Start**

Many federal programs cannot serve domestic violence victims and homeless families with children because they do not fit the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development definition of homeless. Furthermore, a shortage of affordable housing in Kentucky has caused domestic violence victims and homeless families with children to stay in shelters longer than in the past, leading to a shortage of space and forcing the shelters to turn away hundreds of victims each year. *Safe Start* eases the burden on shelters by offering vouchers to this population. Like *Safe Place*, existing agencies provide support services.

With both programs, Kentucky Housing Corporation provides the first component of self-sufficiency: a place to live. Statewide and local partnerships and case management agencies assist individuals or families with other needs to lead them to self-sufficiency.

For the first two years Safe Havens operated, it used Housing Assistance Funds (HAF) from KHC. The HAF is composed partially of funds from administration fees. Kentucky Housing used this discretionary fund for years to pay for housing projects which fall outside guidelines of many grant programs. Kentucky Housing's Board of Directors dedicated money from the HAF to support Safe Havens.

Due to more requests for HAF to be used in other projects, KHC set to secure permanent funding for Safe Havens. In July 2007, Kentucky Housing allocated some HOME funds to Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) in order to secure Safe Havens' future sustainability.

Beginning in October 2007, KHC moved all current Safe Havens participants to Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Programs throughout the state. Any participants who were not eligible to move to permanent housing were moved from HAF to HOME TBRA funding. This funding stream allows KHC to continue Safe Havens as it operated for the previous two years with a few minor adjustments. The final transfers to permanent housing or TBRA funding were made in June 2008.

Kentucky Housing Corporation, again, in July 2008 allocated HOME funding for Safe Havens to continue sustainability. Through the switch in funding streams, Safe Havens now has stable funding and, because of the TBRA requirements, now has a stronger income verification and agreement component.

Safe Havens staff can now focus more attention on helping families reach economic self-sufficiency instead of concentrating on securing other funding for sustainability. In the long-term, Safe Havens will now serve more families with more effective services due to the funding switch.

### **When and Why it was Undertaken**

The *Safe Havens* Program is part of *Kentucky's Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness*, initially implemented in January 2006. Safe Havens, which was only scheduled to operate for two years when it was created, meets a strong need in the state to fight rural homelessness. Studies have proven that the cost of doing nothing about chronic homelessness is substantially higher than addressing the needs of this population. Domestic violence and persistent mental illness are two of the leading causes of homelessness in Kentucky. This program's goal is to serve these two populations and eventually help to end chronic homelessness in the state.

### **Results/Accomplishments**

The Safe Havens Program was so successful over its first two years in existence that KHC decided to find a more permanent funding source to ensure its continuation.

- Safe Havens has 752 participants in active case management.
- Over 200 are either employed or going to school.
- Almost 95 participants have completed the program.

### **Why It Is Meritorious**

This program helps important populations in the state of Kentucky, domestic violence victims, homeless families with children and persons with serious and persistent mental illness. In the long-term, Safe Havens will now serve more families with more effective services thanks to its evolutionary funding source switch.