**Bucks County Housing Link**

**Pilot Factsheet**

**What is the Bucks County Housing Link?**

The Bucks County Housing Link is a single-point-of-entry call center and coordinated assessment center for all persons experiencing a housing-related crisis in Bucks County. The Housing Link, accessed by phone at 1-800-810-4434, will screen all callers with a brief interview to determine the household’s basic eligibility for housing assistance. The coordinated assessment center will then receive a referral for the household and will call them to schedule an in-person appointment at the nearest regional coordinated assessment center. At this appointment, the coordinated assessment center will determine the level of housing assistance needed to resolve the crisis and the available assistance options. Persons in crisis will then be referred to the most appropriate housing assistance program to resolve their crisis.

**When will the Bucks County Housing Link open?**

The BC Housing Link will begin its pilot phase on November 11, 2013. All agencies that receive calls for housing-related crises are encouraged to refer callers directly to the Housing Link starting that day.

**Which providers will be participating in the pilot?**

The pilot providers are: Family Service Association, Bucks County Housing Group, Bucks County Opportunity Council, and Keystone Opportunity Center. All providers in the pilot have agreed to accept clients that are referred by the Housing Link, and to “close the side door” for all other requests for assistance.

**What should I say to someone calling my agency and requesting assistance for housing?**

To refer a caller to the Housing Link, it is recommended that staff state the following:

I am happy to assist you with accessing housing resources and services. At this time you will need to call the Bucks County Housing Link at 1-800-810-4434. This is a new process but we are confident that your needs will be assessed and you will be directed to the assistance that will best support you. Please know that individual housing providers will only provide assistance to callers referred by the Housing Link.

**What should I tell callers to expect when they call the BC Housing Link?**

Callers will be interviewed with a 20-question screening tool that will take approximately 15 minutes to complete over the phone. Callers will then be called back by one of the coordinated assessment center agencies to schedule an in-person appointment at the location nearest to them. At this appointment, which will last approximately 1 hour, the caller will be asked to bring documentation for program eligibility verification, and will complete a program eligibility assessment as well as a nationally-recognized vulnerability assessment to determine the most appropriate type of assistance for them.

**Is the Homeless Hotline still in operation?**

No- the Homeless Hotline will now function as the Housing Link Call Center.  The Hotline number, 1-800-810-4434, will now serve as the Housing Link single-point-of-entry phone number.

**How will shelter placements be made?**

Referrals to the BC Homeless Emergency Shelter operated by Family Service Association or the Interfaith Hospitality Network operated by Keystone Opportunity Center will only be accepted through the Housing Link. Any persons requesting or in need of a bed at either shelter must call the Housing Link.

Referrals to the shelter at A Woman’s Place or Valley Youth House will be taken both from the Housing Link and through direct referral to the agency.

**What kinds of calls will be taken by the Housing Link?**

The Housing Link will provide assistance for persons experiencing a housing-related crisis only. Calls for other services will be referred elsewhere as appropriate.

**What are the hours of the Housing Link?**

The Housing Link Call Center is staffed from 8:30am – 4:30pm Monday- Friday. Voicemail is available during non-business hours and will be returned on the next business day.