

# Housing Stabilization Services Guide for Billable Activities

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Understanding, tracking, and correctly documenting the various types of billable services within the Housing Stabilization Services program is an important part of building a sustainable program. This guide will help providers correctly translate the services and supports provided to their clients into billable claims.

*Note:* Official guidance on billable activities is available on the Minnesota Department of Human Services' [Housing Stabilization Services Policy page](#). This document is intended to help Housing Stabilization Services providers consider and implement this guidance in the context of their own organizations.

## Key questions to ask

When determining whether a particular activity or service is billable, consider:

### Is the activity being done with a specific client or on behalf of a specific client?

- ✓ Example A: Meeting with prospective landlord to see if they have a unit available for a particular client
- ✗ Meeting with prospective landlord to educate them about your program

### Does the activity support the client's goals as related to housing stability?

- ✓ Example B: Practicing anxiety management techniques and discussing how to implement them to improve their relationship with their landlord or neighbor
- ✗ Practicing anxiety management techniques

### Does it fit under an allowable activity within Housing Stabilization Services?

Example A → Housing Transition Service: "Assisting the person with the housing search and application process"

Example B → Housing Sustaining Service: "Coaching to develop and maintain key relationships with property managers and neighbors"

## Methods of service delivery: Understanding remote and indirect services

The chart below outlines the various methods of delivery that providers may want to use for Housing Stabilization Services. If there are percentage limitations on those activities, as with remote contact, that is noted. All interactions must be documented in your agency’s systems and that documentation should lead to the creation of a claim for payment of services. Such documentation is subject to audit and review by DHS and/or Managed Care Organizations that have been or will be billed for payment. Document in case notes whether the activity was provided directly, in-person OR remote OR indirect (one instance of service provision can never be more than one of these categories). For additional details regarding documentation requirements, refer to the Housing Stabilization Services section of the [Minnesota Health Care Programs provider manual](#).

	Direct/In-person	Direct/Remote	Indirect
<b>Definition</b>	Face-to-face physically with the person	Phone, video conferencing or text message directly with the person	Tasks performed on behalf of the person without the person being present
<b>Eligible activities</b>	All activities may be provided directly	All activities may be provided remotely (exception: transportation while working with a client on housing stability)	Only certain activities can be provided indirectly (those designated with an asterisk on the <a href="#">DHS Housing Stabilization Services policy website</a> )
<b>Limits</b>	No limit	Limited to 20% of direct services in a calendar month <i>Note: This limit is waived during the Public Health Emergency.</i>	Expectation is that majority of services are provided as direct service

## How much time spent counts as a “billable unit”?

Housing Transition and Housing Sustaining Services are billed in 15-minute units. To bill for a 15-minute unit, you must provide at least 8 minutes of service. For example, if you provide 8-22 minutes of service, you may bill for one 15-minute unit. If you provide 23-37 minutes of service, you may bill for two 15-minute units. Additional guidance for tracking time and billing from CMS is available [here](#).

## Examples

### Housing Stabilization Services provided in a month



4 units in person + 1 unit remote = 5 units of direct services

$1 / 5 = 20\%$  of direct services provided remotely

(Indirect services should be disregarded in this calculation.)

Another way to think of it: Make sure no more than 1 out of every 5 direct service units is remote.

*(Note: This limit will not go into effect until the Public Health Emergency ends.)*

### Examples: Services that can be provided under Housing Transition Services ONLY

Service	In-person/Direct	Remote	Indirect
Developing a housing transition plan	Working with client to make a list of needs/wants in housing	Phone call with a client to ask a question about their housing needs	Researching housing options to go through with the client at your next visit
Supporting the person in applying for benefits to afford their housing, including helping the person determine which benefits they may be eligible for	Attending a meeting with the client and their SSI Advocate	Texting conversation with the client to remind them about their meeting with their SSI Advocate and reviewing documents to bring with them that lasts at least 8 minutes	Calling the SSI Advocate to provide supporting evidence for the Social Security application

<b>Assisting the person with the housing search and application process</b>	Calling potential references with your client at your office	Conference call with your client and potential references	Calling potential references on behalf of your client
<b>Assisting the person with tenant screening and housing assessments</b>	Practicing landlord interviews with a client	Phone call with client to review interview strategies before they meet with a landlord	Reviewing a particular landlord's tenant screening requirements to assess how it will impact your client before your next visit
<b>Helping the person understand and develop a budget</b>	Completing a budget worksheet with a client in your office	Completing a budget worksheet with a client over Face Time	N/A This service may not be provided indirectly
<b>Helping the person understand and negotiate a lease</b>	Reviewing a lease for a new housing opportunity with the person	Phone call with the client to review questions to ask about the lease before they meet with a landlord	N/A This service may not be provided indirectly
<b>Helping the person meet and build a relationship with a prospective landlord</b>	Meeting with the client and prospective landlord for a tour of a unit	Meeting with the client and prospective landlord over Zoom	N/A This service may not be provided indirectly
<b>Helping the person find funding for deposits</b>	Going with the client to the county to apply for emergency assistance	Texting the client to remind them to apply for emergency assistance at the county	Calling the county to check status of the client's emergency assistance application
<b>Helping the person organize their move</b>	Calling the landlord with your client at the office to set up a move in date	Phone call with the client to discuss potential move-in dates	Calling the landlord on behalf of the client to set up a move-in date
<b>Researching possible housing options for the person</b>	Reviewing online vacancies listings with a client in your office	Reviewing online vacancies listing with a client over Face Time	Searching online vacancy listings to print and bring with you to the next client visit
<b>Contacting possible housing options for the person</b>	Calling prospective landlords with the client at your office	Conference call with client and prospective landlord	Calling a prospective landlord on behalf of a client
<b>Identifying resources to pay for deposits or home goods</b>	Working with the client to fill out a Bridging application at your home visit	Texting your client with information on how to obtain and complete a Bridging application	Filling out a Bridging application for your client to review at your next meeting
<b>Identifying resources to cover moving expenses</b>	Meeting with client's waiver Transitional Services provider to apply for moving expenses	Conference call with client and their waiver Transitional Services provider to apply for moving expenses	Calling the client's waiver Transitional Services provider to determine status of application for moving expenses

<b>Completing housing applications on behalf of the service recipient</b>	Helping the client complete a housing application during an office visit	Reviewing a housing application with a client over Face Time	Picking up a housing application from a prospective landlord to bring to your client
<b>Working to expunge records or access reasonable accommodations</b>	Preparing a reasonable accommodations letter with your client on a home visit	Calling a client to remind them to deliver the reasonable accommodations letter to their landlord	Writing and mailing a reasonable accommodations letter on behalf of your client
<b>Identifying services and benefits that will support the person with housing instability</b>	Meeting with client and a home health agency to set up housekeeping services	Texting a client information about home health agencies that may be able to provide housekeeping services	Calling a home health agency on behalf of your client to ask about housekeeping services
<b>Ensuring the new living arrangement is safe for the person and ready for move-in</b>	Attending a pre-move in unit walk through with a client	Phone call with the client to remind them of things to look for before they go to their pre-move in unit walk through	Calling the landlord to set up a time for the client's pre-move in unit walkthrough

### Examples: Services that can be provided under Housing Sustaining ONLY

<b>Service</b>	<b>In-person/Direct</b>	<b>Remote</b>	<b>Indirect</b>
<b>Developing, updating and modifying the housing support and crisis/safety plan on a regular basis</b>	Meeting with client in their new home to review housing support and crisis/safety plan	Videoconference with client to check in on plan	Researching local services and supports to include in client's plan
<b>Preventing and early identification of behaviors that may jeopardize continued housing</b>	Meeting with client in your office to discuss options for treatment of addiction that is impacting housing stability	Calling your client to discuss logistics of entering the treatment program	N/A
<b>Educating and training on roles, rights, and responsibilities of the tenant and property manager</b>	Reviewing property rules with client at home visit	Texting reminders to client regarding the importance of following property rules	N/A
<b>Coaching to develop and maintain key relationships with property managers and neighbors</b>	At home visit, planning with client to call the landlord about rent due date	Videoconference with client to plan a call the landlord about rent due date	N/A
<b>Advocating with community resources</b>	Meeting with client and Legal Aid to discuss how	Calling client to provide information about how	Calling Legal Aid to learn about options for

to prevent eviction when housing is at risk and maintain person's safety	to address needed repairs with landlord	Legal Aid can help them address needed repairs with landlord	helping client address needed repairs with landlord
Assistance with the housing recertification processes	Completing housing voucher recertification paperwork with client at local library	Texting client reminder to complete housing voucher recertification paperwork	Completing housing voucher recertification paperwork on behalf of the client
Continued training on being a good tenant, lease compliance, and household management	Meeting with client at local coffee shop to review lease requirements	Texting client reminders related to lease requirements	N/A
Supporting the person to apply for benefits to retain housing	Going to county office with client to apply for MSA Housing Assistance	Calling client to review process for applying for MSA Housing Assistance	Completing MSA Housing Assistance paperwork on behalf of client
Supporting the person to understand and maintain/increase income and benefits to retain housing	Reviewing HB101 and DB101 tools on benefits, work incentives and budgeting with client in office	Videoconference with client to review HB101 and DB101 tools on benefits, work incentives and budgeting	Completing housing budget examples on HB101 to review with client at next visit
Supporting the building of natural housing supports and resources in the community including building supports and resources related to a person's culture and identity	Touring the local library with client to show them how to use the computers and find other resources to help with maintaining housing	Texting client about resources available at local library to help with maintaining housing	N/A
Working with property manager or landlord to promote housing retention	Meeting with client and landlord to address rent payment issues	Conference call with client and landlord to address rent payment issues	Calling landlord on behalf of the client to address rent payment issues

### Examples: Services that can be provided under BOTH Housing Transition and Housing Sustaining

Service	In-person/Direct	Remote	Indirect
Providing transportation with the person receiving services present and discussing housing related issues	Making a list of questions to ask the landlord while riding the bus to tour a unit	N/A	N/A This service may not be provided indirectly

<b>Promoting/supporting cultural practice needs and understandings with prospective landlords, property managers</b>	Meeting with the client at your office to discuss housing needs related to cultural practices	Phone call with the client to discuss housing needs related to cultural practices	Meeting with a potential landlord to provide essential information about your client's cultural practices
<b>Arranging for adaptive house related accommodations required by the person</b>	Meeting with the person and their landlord to ask for permission for a grab bar installation in the bathroom	Texting the client strategies to help them talk to their landlord about installing a grab bar in the bathroom	Calling the landlord on behalf of the client to ask for permission for a grab bar installation in the bathroom
<b>Arranging for assistive technology required by the person</b>	Helping a client learn how to use their light up doorbell	Texting a client information about how to get a light up doorbell	Ordering a light up doorbell for a client

## Services that are not covered

<b>Services that are not covered (DHS)</b>	<b>Additional examples of activities that are never billable</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Room and Board (including moving expenses)</li> <li>• Deposits</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Furnishings</li> <li>• Rent</li> <li>• Utilities</li> <li>• No-show appointments</li> <li>• Staff travel time with a person not in the vehicle</li> <li>• Direct or indirect services provision in a group setting</li> <li>• Services provided outside of Minnesota</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sending an email to a client</li> <li>• Sending a fax to a client</li> <li>• Leaving a voicemail for a client</li> <li>• Documentation in a client's chart</li> <li>• Data entry</li> <li>• Completing agency paperwork related to a client</li> <li>• Generic staff meetings</li> <li>• Calling a landlord for general information on their housing policies</li> </ul>