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Newcomer Housing Stability Assessment Tool

This Newcomer Housing Stability Assessment Tool (NHSAT), developed by Refugee Housing Solutions (RHS) and Switchboard, provides a comprehensive assessment of housing stability among newcomers, with the aim of identifying potential challenges and facilitating targeted interventions to promote secure and sustainable long-term housing outcomes. By analyzing key domains and components relevant to housing stability, this tool enables service providers to gain a holistic understanding of the newcomer’s housing circumstances, allowing them to customize support services to meet individual needs effectively.

The domains and components within the Newcomer Housing Stability Assessment Tool (NHSAT) are as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Domain | Components |
| Wellness | *A. Health and Wellness Assessment* |
| Risks | *B. Legal Status and Housing*  *C. Financial Instability and Housing* |
| Socialization and Daily Functioning | *D. Social Support Networks*  *E. Cultural and Linguistic Barriers* |
| Housing History | *F. Previous Housing Instability and Experiences of Homelessness* |

Basic Information:

* Applicant First Name and Last Name:
* Gender:
* Country of Origin:
* Date of Arrival in Current Location:
* Legal Status:
* Current Address:
  + If no current address, Name and Address of Resettlement Agency:
* Household Size:
* Employed (Yes / No):
  + If yes, Occupation and Income:

Enter each household member’s information:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | First Name | Last Name | Gender | Date of Birth/Age | Relationship to Applicant |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |

Scoring instructions

Review each response provided by the respondent and identify the severity ranking assigned to each option or item. Assign severity rankings based on a 0-4 scale:

0: No/Minimal Impact

1: Mild Impact

2: Moderate Impact

3: Significant Impact

4: Extreme Impact

Then, interpret the total score. Lower scores indicate low to mild severity. Higher scores suggest moderate to severe conditions.

Use the score sheet to identify severity patterns, in turn informing the housing support you offer newcomers.

Wellness

*A. Health and Wellness Assessment*

Mental Health to Address:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 4 | * *Severe housing-related mental health issues, including homelessness or unsafe conditions; needs urgent support* |
| 3 | * *Poor mental health housing-related stress; consistently affects overall well-being* |
| 2 | * *Fair mental health, with moderate housing-related stress; occasionally affects overall well-being* |
| 1 | * *Good mental health with occasional mild housing-related stress* |
| 0 | * *Excellent mental health; feels secure and comfortable in housing* |

Exposure to Unsafe Living Conditions:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *4* | * *Severe safety hazards or deteriorating living conditions pose immediate risks to health and safety* |
| *3* | * *Significant safety concerns or maintenance issues present, posing potential risks to health and well-being* |
| *2* | * *Moderate safety concerns or maintenance issues, impacting the overall safety and habitability of the living environment* |
| *1* | * *Some minor safety concerns or maintenance issues are present; overall, the living environment is relatively safe and habitable* |
| *0* | * *Living in a safe and well-maintained environment with no significant safety concerns or hazards* |

Physical Wellness to Address (ADA):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 4 | * *Severe physical wellness challenges; experiencing chronic health issues or limitations directly caused by the housing situation, requiring extensive ADA accommodations and significantly impacting quality of life and daily functioning* |
| 3 | * *Poor physical wellness, facing significant health issues directly related to the housing situation, requiring substantial ADA* *accommodations* |
| 2 | * *Fair physical wellness, experiencing moderate health issues directly related to the housing situation, requiring moderate ADA accommodations* |
| 1 | * *Good physical wellness overall, with occasional minor health issues directly related to the housing situation and manageable with ADA accommodations* |
| 0 | * *Excellent physical wellness, experiencing minimal or no health issues directly related to the housing situation or ADA accommodations* |

Score\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Risks

*B. Legal Status and Housing*

Assess the newcomer’s legal status:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 4 | * *Severe legal issues or precarious legal status; facing imminent risks of deportation, detention, or other legal consequences that threaten housing stability* |
| 3 | * *Significant challenges or barriers related to legal status, leading to increased vulnerability to housing instability* |
| 2 | * *Moderate level of instability or uncertainty regarding legal status, with potential implications for housing stability* |
| 1 | * *Some minor uncertainties or pending matters related to legal status, but overall stability is relatively secure* |
| 0 | * *Legal status is stable and secure, with no pending issues or concerns that may impact housing stability* |

Has the newcomer experienced discrimination or violations of their housing rights based on their immigration status or ethnicity?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 4 | * *Persistent and severe discrimination or rights violations; facing systemic barriers and injustices that severely compromise housing stability* |
| 3 | * *Frequent experiences of discrimination or rights violations, significantly* *impacting housing opportunities and stability* |
| 2 | * *Occasional experiences of discrimination or rights violations, leading to some challenges in securing and maintaining stable housing* |
| 1 | * *Rare instances of discrimination or rights violations, with minimal impact on overall housing stability* |
| 0 | * *No instances of discrimination or housing rights violations based on immigration status or ethnicity* |

*C. Financial Instability and Housing*

Rate the newcomer’s ability to afford current housing expenses, including rent or mortgage payments, utilities, and other related costs:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 4 | * *Severely unable to afford housing expenses; already facing eviction, foreclosure, or other immediate threats to housing stability* |
| 3 | * *Unable to afford housing expenses; facing consistent financial hardship and at risk of falling behind on payments* |
| 2 | * *Struggling to afford housing expenses; experiencing frequent financial stress and difficulty meeting payments* |
| 1 | * *Able to afford housing expenses, but with occasional difficulty or minor financial strain* |
| 0 | * *Able to comfortably afford all housing expenses without any financial strain* |

How stable is the newcomer’s income source(s) or employment status in meeting their housing needs?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 4 | * *Completely unstable income source(s) or employment status; facing chronic unemployment, irregular income, or systemic barriers to stable employment, resulting in severe housing instability* |
| 3 | * *Highly unstable income source(s) or employment status; experiencing frequent job loss, unemployment, or underemployment that poses significant risks to housing stability.* |
| 2 | * *Moderately unstable income source(s) or employment status; facing periodic layoffs, reduced hours, or other challenges that affect housing stability.* |
| 1 | * *Relatively stable income source(s) or employment status, with occasional fluctuations or uncertainties that may impact housing stability* |
| 0 | * *Stable and secure income source(s) or employment status, providing consistent and sufficient income to meet housing needs* |

Score\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Socialization and Daily Functioning

*D. Social Support Networks*

Does the newcomer have access to support networks or resources within the local community that can assist them with housing-related needs or challenges?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 4 | * *No access to support networks or resources; experiencing significant barriers or systemic challenges in accessing assistance for housing-related needs* |
| 3 | * *Minimal support networks or resources, complicating housing challenges* |
| 2 | * *Limited access to culturally relevant support networks or housing resources* |
| 1 | * *Some access to support networks or resources, easing housing challenges* |
| 0 | * *Strong community support networks and resources, impactfully guiding housing issues* |

*E. Cultural and Linguistic Barriers*

Does the newcomer encounter challenges navigating the English language and local cultural norms?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 4 | * *Severe language and cultural barriers; unable to effectively communicate or engage with the local community, resulting in complete social isolation and marginalization* |
| 3 | * *Significant language and cultural barriers; facing persistent challenges in understanding and being understood by others, leading to social isolation or exclusion* |
| 2 | * *Limited language and cultural proficiency; experiencing frequent difficulties or misunderstandings in communication, hindering full participation in community life* |
| 1 | * *Adequate language and cultural skills, with occasional challenges or misunderstandings in communication; able to navigate interactions with the community reasonably well* |
| 0 | * *Proficient in the local language and cultural norms; able to communicate effectively and engage with the community without significant barriers* |

Score\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Housing History

*F. Previous Housing Instability*

How many times has the newcomer moved since arriving?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 4 | * *Multiple moves or highly frequent changes in living situations since arriving in current location, indicating severe housing instability and/or experiences of homelessness* |
| 3 | * *Several moves since arriving in current location, indicating significant housing instability* |
| 2 | * *Some moves since arriving in current location, indicating moderate housing instability and/or occasional changes in living situation* |
| 1 | * *Minimal moves since arriving in current location, with only occasional disruptions or instability in housing* |
| 0 | * *No moves since arriving in the current location, indicating stable housing* |

What were the primary reasons for the newcomer’s previous housing instability? Select one option for each section. Then rank it in the box based on how it impacts the newcomer’s housing instability.

Financial Challenges:

* *No financial impact*
* *Loss of income or unemployment*
* *Insufficient income to afford housing expenses*
* *High cost of living or housing affordability issues*
* *Significant debt or financial obligations impacting housing stability*

Housing Market Conditions:

* *Limited availability of affordable housing options*
* *High demand for housing leading to difficulty finding suitable accommodations*
* *Discrimination or barriers in accessing housing due to newcomer status*

Personal Circumstances:

* *Relationship breakdown or family conflict leading to housing instability*
* *Health issues or medical emergencies impacting housing stability*
* *Legal issues such as eviction, landlord disputes, or immigration-related challenges*

Lack of Support Services:

* *Limited access to newcomer support programs or resources*
* *Inadequate assistance in navigating housing-related challenges*
* *Linguistic or cultural barriers in accessing support services*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 4 | * *Severe impact on housing instability* |
| 3 | * *Significant impact on housing instability* |
| 2 | * *Moderate impact on housing instability* |
| 1 | * *Mild impact on housing instability* |
| 0 | * *No or minimal impact on housing instability* |

What is the client’s current living situation?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 4 | * *Homeless or living in emergency/temporary accommodations due to severe housing instability* |
| 3 | * *Housing situation is precarious or unstable, posing immediate risks to health or safety* |
| 2 | * *Living in substandard or inadequate housing, with significant deficiencies or safety concerns* |
| 1 | * *Residing in acceptable temporary housing, but may not fully meet personal needs or preferences* |
| 0 | * *Currently residing in suitable and stable housing that meets personal needs and preferences* |

Does the newcomer receive any housing assistance or subsidies?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 4 | * *Ineligible for housing assistance or subsidies, facing financial strain due to lack of support* |
| 3 | * *Not receiving any housing assistance or subsidies, relying solely on personal income to cover housing expenses* |
| 2 | * *Receiving limited housing assistance or subsidies, providing minimal relief for housing expenses* |
| 1 | * *Receiving some housing assistance or subsidies, but it does not fully cover housing expenses* |
| 0 | * *Receiving substantial housing assistance or subsidies that cover a significant portion of housing expenses* |

Score\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

References:

* OrgCode Consulting Inc.: [Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT) Manual](https://www.orgcode.com/service-prioritization-decision-assistance-tool-on-demand-registration), Version 4.1
* HUD Exchange: [Rapid Re-Housing](https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Rapid-Re-Housing-Brief.pdf)
* U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness: [Scale Housing and Supports That Meet Demand](https://www.usich.gov/federal-strategic-plan/scale-housing-and-supports-meet-demand)

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