

MSHDA Housing Choice Voucher Referral Process

Purpose

The purpose of the CoC's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) prioritization process is to ensure that resources are distributed equitably and effectively to those with the greatest need while also identifying individuals and households most likely to achieve stability through the program. By integrating data-driven metrics with collaborative decision-making, the process ensures that the HCV program addresses systemic needs, personal challenges, and the potential for positive outcomes, ultimately fostering stability for vulnerable households. This process will result in the CoC providing MSHDA with 'warm referrals' to fill all allocated HCV slots as quickly as possible with eligible households.

Referral of Special Populations-

The Steering Council may, at its discretion, designate "special populations" for the purposes of the Prioritization List. Special populations may comprise members of certain subpopulations, people living in certain geographies or locations, or other characteristics as determined by the Steering Council. Special populations may be designated for a limited or open-ended period of time.

Step 1: Qualification

Households seeking assistance must meet the HEARTH definition of homelessness under Category 1 or [4](#).

Step 2: Prioritization

Preference order of priority is as follows:

- (1) Households eligible to move from a CoC Program or ESG housing project to HCV
- (2) Households that meet HUD's definition of chronic homelessness
- (3) Households that meet the Category 1 definition of homelessness:
 - a. Youth-headed (aged 18-24) households, veteran-headed households, and households fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence
 - b. All other households who meet the Category 1 definition of homelessness
- (4) Households that meet the Category 4 definition of homelessness

Factors Considered for Prioritization

- Quantitative Data
 - VI-SPDAT score.
 - The length of time a household has experienced homelessness, disability status, chronicity, unsheltered homelessness status, etc.
- Qualitative Data

- Collaborative discussions among providers to assess individual circumstances and progress (i.e. case conferencing).
- Insights and observations from case workers based on direct interactions with households.
- Special Considerations
 - Housing loss due to extreme circumstances beyond the individual’s control (e.g. apartment complex fire/flood, natural disasters) that occur during the previous six months or less.
 - Extreme medical need that prohibits independent living either temporarily or permanently.
 - Special considerations are to be brought to the Steering Council for official approval before moving forward.

Step 3: Referral

The CoC is responsible for referring households to MSHDA. The CoC’s Special Populations working group (“the by-name list group”) is responsible for assisting the CoC in this task.

Partnered Agency responsibilities include:

- Identifying eligible households via the CoC’s by-name list (BNL), emergency shelter rosters, and street outreach.
- Making an initial determination of eligibility under the criteria in this document and other criteria as specified by MSDHA.
- Making and maintaining contact with eligible households throughout the identification and referral process.
- Securing vital documents necessary for a successful housing intake such as identification.
- Completing the forms and requests for required information received from the MSHDA Housing Agent such as the Household Income, Asset, and Expense Declaration.
- Collecting required income, asset, and expense documentation such as social security benefit letters and paystubs.

Step 4: Post-Referral Supports

To the extent funding is available and individual households are eligible, the CoC and its service providers may, in coordination with MSHDA, provide the following services:

- Housing search
- Transportation for the purposes of securing housing and supportive services
- Housing application and startup costs

- Case management and supportive services to facilitate the transition from homelessness or other HUD-funded housing projects to HCV-funded housing