

Blue Ridge Continuum of Care

Permanent Supportive Housing Operating Guidelines



Summary

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is permanent housing in which housing assistance (e.g., long-term leasing or rental assistance) and supportive services are provided to assist chronically homeless households. The supportive services are designed to build independent living and tenancy skills and connect people with community-based health care, treatment and employment services.

Program services at a minimum include: provide access to and stabilization in housing by assisting individuals with developing a housing plan; identifying and applying for affordable housing options; administering rental assistance; maintaining effective relationships with landlords, property managers, and housing assistance providers; inspecting rental units; providing expertise to tenants in tenant-landlord and fair housing laws, including the use of reasonable accommodations; coordinating wrap-around services to promote housing stability and overall wellbeing.

Purpose

The purpose of this funding opportunity is to support rental subsidies and housing-related services to be administered by an entity (or partnering entities) to provide stable, supportive housing for households meeting HUD's definition of [chronic homelessness](#).

PSH Program Required Components

PSH programs must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Assisted housing is affordable, meaning the tenant household pays no more than 30% of its income toward rent and utilities; [guidelines for calculating rent](#) consistently among program participants must be followed;
- 3) Proactively engages members of the tenant household in a flexible and comprehensive array of supportive services, without requiring participation in services as a condition of ongoing tenancy; participation in support services is not required to get or keep housing;
- 4) Effectively coordinates with key partners to address issues resulting from medical problems, substance use, or mental health and other crises, with a focus on fostering housing stability and wellness; and
- 5) Supports tenants in connecting with community-based resources and activities, interacting with diverse individuals including those without disabilities, and building strong social support networks.

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Other key elements required in the PSH program

- 1) Before moving into PSH, participants are asked about their housing preferences and are offered a reasonable choice of units that would be similarly available to non-disabled persons.
- 2) Housing is integrated. Program participants have the opportunity to interact with neighbors who do not live in HUD-assisted units.
- 3) Leases comply with the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act and, therefore, do not have any provisions that would not be found in leases held by someone who is not a program participant. Leases are renewable at tenants' and owners' option.
- 4) Support services promote recovery and are designed to help participants choose, obtain and keep housing.
- 5) Program participants have choices in the support services that they receive. They are asked about their choices, can choose from a range of services, and different tenants receive different types of services based on their needs and preferences.
- 6) As needs change over time, participants can receive more intensive or less intensive support services without losing their homes.

Housing provided in the PSH program must meet the following criteria

- 1) Units requiring assistance will receive no more than the current [HUD Fair Market Rent \(FMR\) designation](#). Efficiency units will receive no more than the 0 bedroom FMR.
- 2) The PSH program must ensure that the unit [rent is reasonable](#) in relation to rents being charged for comparable unassisted units, in the general area, with similar features and amenities and are not more than rents currently being charged by the same owner for comparable unassisted units. Comparable rents can be checked by using a market study of rents charged for units of different sizes in different locations or by reviewing advertisements for comparable rental units. Rent reasonableness must be documented.
- 3) Housing units must at least meet HUD Housing Quality Standards (HQS). HQS inspections must be documented in each program participant's file.
- 4) Income verification must be performed at the initial lease-signing for the unit with full source documentation (pay stubs, social security statements, etc.) and conducted annually thereafter.
- 5) PSH programs shall not require a minimum tenant rental contribution.

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Evaluation and Reporting

The Blue Ridge Continuum of Care's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) must be used to track project enrollments, referrals, services, case notes and other Federal and local data collection requirements. The PSH projects must also participate in the CoC's Coordinated Entry work flow in HMIS and only accept referrals through the CoC's prioritization and referral process. Project performance will be evaluated using the CoC's performance metrics for Permanent Supportive Housing projects.

Performance metrics include:

- Percentage of participants remaining in permanent housing or exiting to permanent housing destinations
- Percentage of participants age 18 or older who increase their total income
- Percentage of adults receiving mainstream benefits at program exit
- Percentage of households who do not return to homelessness two years after exiting the program