

BRIDGING RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (BRAP)

General Program Eligibility Webinar – March 28, 2024

Q & A

Q: Is an adjustment disorder a qualify diagnosis?

A: Yes, only Primary Diagnosis that are Neuro-cognitive, Neuro-developmental, Antisocial Personality, and non-Co-Occurring Substance Use Disorders are excluded.

Q: Are there any practitioners available to evaluate homeless individuals who have no provider?

A: Unfortunately, LAA staff are unable to evaluate and diagnose applicants. As LAAs are mental health agencies, they do have non-subsidy staff that can evaluate and diagnosis clients, however they would need to be on their caseload.

In some jurisdictions they can be evaluated by PATH providers (must be a PATH client).

Organizations like Greater Portland Health and Spurwink have outpatient services for clinical assessments. Hospitals and ACT Teams can get you a clinical assessment too.

Sweetser, Maine Behavioral Health, Alternative Wellness Services are some other agencies that can do an assessment, as well.

We do provide that contact information for applicants who are not currently connected to mental health services.

Q: What if the person is staying with a friend, but there are limitations on how many days the friend can let them stay in a month/year. Would they be considered Homeless?

A: As long as the individual is residing with the friend, they are not considered literally homeless as they are “couch surfing”. Staying in a non-homeless situation for longer than 7 consecutive days is considered a “break”, and does not count towards your homelessness.

Q: Can people on the sex offender registry obtain a BRAP voucher?

A: Yes. Any individual that is eligible for BRAP is able to obtain a voucher. If they are on the registry, they are free to apply. Just note: If they receive a voucher, it will be up to them to ensure that they find adequate housing that fits within the guidelines of their situation, i.e. school proximity, etc.

If they are also barred from Section 8, they can receive a waiver for that eligibility criteria. They will need to provide verification of this ineligibility with their application.

Q: Is BRAP currently tied to HMIS, or is that still on pause?

A: At this time, BRAP is entering all homeless participants that consent into HMIS as the program has historically done. There have been no changes.

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Q: What is the long-term plan for rolling BRAP into Coordinated Entry with HMIS.

A: At this time, there is no plan for rolling BRAP into Coordinated Entry (CES).

CES is designed as a coordinated method of pooling resources for homeless individuals and families, which only accounts for a single priority within BRAP.

BRAP is designed as a one-in-all system, where we offer assistance to all eligible individuals, ranked by priority. Since we have to target vouchers to those that fall specifically within our program priorities, it would not be prudent to dedicate vouchers for Priority 3 when the program is intended to prioritize those coming from Psychiatric Hospitalization and Incarceration first.

Individuals that are accessed and within the CES are always free to apply, we just can't offer them a guaranteed voucher as we have to ensure that we are gearing assistance to those with the highest priority first.

Q: Do VA benefits work in lieu of SSI/SSDI for eligibility?

A: Yes, with a waiver, an applicant can be approved with another disability benefit.

Q: Who do we contact about Waivers, and does the CAA review Appeals?

A: All waivers should start with the LAA. If you are having trouble, or feel that you have sufficient reason for a waiver or reasonable accommodation, the participant or their provider should reach out to the LAA. LAAs do have some discretion in some matters.

If the LAA is unable to make the decision, or feels that a situation warrants a waiver, they will ask for the request in writing, and they will request a waiver from the CAA.

Yes, the CAA reviews and makes a determination on all appeals submitted by the LAAs.

Q: Does an SRO count as a unit, and can they be subsidized?

A: Yes, SRO is both a bedroom size, and a unit type. SRO's are traditionally a special housing option where the individual rents a room in a facility that is designated for SROs, like the YMCA, etc.

We can subsidize a SRO, as long as the unit passes a health and safety inspection.

Please note: SRO's should not be confused with Shared Housing, which is another special housing option where the participant rents a room within a house or other unit. This "room" requires a special lease and is not the same as sharing a unit like roommates.

Q: Are rent limits based on state or federal limits, and are they flexible?

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A: We set Payment Standards comparable to Maine State Housing Authority limits for Section 8 and HCV, which is ultimately based on Federal Fair Market Rates, but adjusted to local standards.

Rates are also set based on funding availability, and can change throughout the year. Shalom posts the current standards on our website.

Payment Standards are the maximum amount that we can authorize for a unit's total rent (Contract Rent + Utility Allowance).