

DHHS Internal PSH Referral Policies & Procedures

(Not an alternative process, but rather a detailed procedure demonstrating how the MCOC established referral process will be applied internally at DHHS, given its unique organizational structure and the volume of referrals it processes to fulfill its CoC grant requirements.)

This document outlines the referral process for State of Maine DHHS CoC-funded Permanent Supportive Housing Program (PSHP) (formerly known as Shelter Plus Care or S+C). The process herein is consistent with the established referral process outlined in the Maine CES Policies and Procedures (See Maine CES Policies and Procedures, “*Overview of Referral Process*”) and provides further details specific to how DHHS will abide by the MCOC referral process given the unique organizational structure of DHHS and the volume of PSH referrals the organizations processes on a regular basis.

Critical elements of this document include:

- Parties involved at each step of the referral process
- Appropriate channels of communication at each step
- Anticipated timelines for completion of each step
- Criteria documenting updates within HMIS
- Procedures for addressing unsuccessful referrals

Overview of the State of Maine DHHS PSHP Referral Process

Referral, in the context of Coordinated Entry, refers to the process by which a participant who is prioritized on the by-name list is connected to a housing opening. All State of Maine DHHS CoC-funded PSHP projects must accept referrals exclusively through the CoC’s defined CE process as described within the MCOC CES Policies and Procedures. The referral process will take place at the Service Hub level.

Step 1: Notification of Housing Opening

DHHS has contracted with Shalom House to serve as its Central Administrative Agency (CAA). In its role as CAA, Shalom House will provide statewide administration of all DHHS CoC-funded PSHP projects. DHHS, as the CoC-grantee, is responsible for ensuring that the CAA follows the referral process outlined herein.

The CAA is responsible for identifying the number of available PSH openings within each Hub’s geographic region on an ongoing basis, and notifying the respective Hub Coordinator of openings within 2 business days of identifying an opening. Notification of openings should be sent to the respective Hub Coordinator via email and should include as much information as possible including:

- # of Referrals desired
- Unit size (if applicable)
- Location (if applicable)
- Homelessness definition (if applicable)
- Date by which they would like list of referrals

Step 2: Identification of Households to be Referred

Case conferencing meetings will be used to identify housing needs and preferences for the top 10-20 households on the list; therefore Hub Coordinators will be able to match CE referrals from the BNL to recommend resources. This will allow Hub Coordinators to make referrals in real time when the CAA requests openings to be filled.

Hub Coordinator will use the priority list to refer the requested number of prioritized households to the opening(s). In some cases, the household(s) being referred may not be the very first name on the list. In some cases, Hub Coordinator will use housing needs and preferences of those households toward the top to ensure appropriate match. For example, a housing provider may have an opening that is available only to households who have a documented disability. If the first person on the list does not have a disabling condition, Hub Coordinator may look to the next person on the priority list.

The Hub Coordinator will send the CAA a list of the names of the referred households in writing via email preferably within 2 business days, but no later than 15 business days of receiving the notification of openings. At a minimum, the list of referred households should the following information:

- Referred CE participant names
- Participant contact information
- Name and contact information of the case manager or service provider working with the participant

Note: If the participant is not working with anyone, the Hub Coordinator will utilize case conferencing to create a plan to support the participant with the application process. The Hub Coordinator must communicate this plan to the CAA via email at the time of referral.

Step 3: Notifying Case Manager and/or Service Provider of Referrals

In addition to sending the referral to the CAA, the Hub Coordinator is responsible for contacting the case manager or service provider of the referred household to inform them of the referral and the application process that should be followed. The Hub Coordinator will make at least 3 attempts at contact on non-consecutive days if the case manager or service provider is unreachable at first contact. The Hub Coordinator should utilize multiple methods of contact (i.e. phone, e-mail) and these attempts should be recorded in HMIS.

In instances where the respective Hub Coordinator has not identified a case manager or provider to support a household on the priority list, the Hub Coordinator may contact the participant directly via phone or email to inform them of their referral to a housing opening. These attempts should be recorded in HMIS.

Step 4: CAA Engagement with Referred Participants

The CAA will provide the case manager or service provider with how to access information or provide a copy of the program application and all required documentation. The case manager or service provider is responsible for assisting the participant with completing the program application and gathering any required documentation.

Program Application Submission

1. Complete program applications must be submitted to the CAA within 15 business days of notification of referral.

If the program application has not been submitted within 15 business days of referral contact:

1. The CAA has discretion to extend the application deadline in 10-day increments based on the needs of the participant, up to a total of 45 days for extension. The CAA is responsible for recording the extensions and justification for extensions.
 2. If the CAA determines that they are unable to contact the client through all known channels and has documented attempts to reach the client, or the participant has exhausted all extensions, the CAA will notify the respective Hub Coordinator in writing and request a replacement referral.
 3. If program application is received by CAA within the 15 business day deadline, but the application is determined to be incomplete, CAA will communicate what is missing to the person who submitted the application and or the case worker in writing; the required information is then due back to CAA within ten (10) business days.
2. Once CAA receives a complete application and determined that the applicant is eligible for MaineCare services, The CAA will also assign the participant to an LAA for ongoing PSH services once the participant has been approved. CAA will notify LAA and Hub Coordinators in writing of the award.

Program Enrollment

The CAA will enroll participants into the appropriate PSH project in HMIS at the time of receipt of the completed application. If after 120 days from the date of PSH enrollment participant has not secured a unit, the LAA will notify CAA of the expiration of the voucher and participant will be disenrolled from the PSH project in HMIS.

Step 5: Feedback Loop Between Hub Coordinator and the CAA

The CAA will be responsible for communicating with the respective Hub Coordinators to inform them of the outcome of the referrals made. The Hub Coordinators will be responsible for updating the status of those household's on the priority list as appropriate.