

## Chapter 3: ELIGIBILITY FOR ASSISTANCE

### 3.1: SPC Permanent Supportive Housing Eligibility

To meet the needs of Maine's most vulnerable homeless population and in conjunction the statewide homeless council and Continuums of Care, Maine has modified its application to HUD. Applicants must meet homelessness, disability and income criteria, as defined by the HEARTH Act. DHHS program has created a priority system for defining the vulnerability of homeless persons. Applicant's homeless status is prioritized as one of the following:

- A. Chronically Homeless
- B. Long-Term Stayer
- C. Literally Homeless
- D. Transitionally Homeless (Individuals and families coming from transitional housing must have originally come from the streets or emergency shelter)
- E. Victim of Domestic Violence Situation

This priority system is designed to award vouchers first to applicant's that demonstrate the greatest severity of need. The SPC program understands that unique circumstances exist and may award reasonable accommodations, as resources permit, for vulnerable homeless persons.

The HEARTH Act outlines federal eligibility requirements for homelessness and disabilities. The program participant recordkeeping requirements and acceptable forms of evidence for homeless status, as well as disability verification are detailed in resources available on HUD Exchange. We encourage you to refer to these materials, as program participant eligibility documentation is a complex topic. Below is brief overview.

Applicant must meet the following criteria to meet SPC program eligibility:

- 1). Homeless, as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act As Amended by S. 896 HEARTH ACT of 2009 as funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [42 USC 11302]; **AND**
- 2). Disabled, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [24 CFR 582.5]**AND**
- 3). Income, the household's annual income at application and project entry may not exceed the very low income limits.

The following section provides a brief overview of the requirements for each situation:

#### A. Homelessness

1. Place not meant for human habitation: Certification from an outreach worker or organization on respective agency letterhead signed and dated, along with dates that

homelessness was witnessed. If unable to verify in this manner, the participant or staff member may prepare a short written statement about the participant's previous living place with dates of homelessness and have the participant and /or staff member sign the statement and date it.

- a. Suitable documentation:
  - i. Written on Letterhead.
  - ii. Duration of homelessness is dated.
  - iii. Document is signed and dated by third-party.
2. Emergency Shelter: Written, signed and dated verification from the shelter on their letterhead, stating the individual has been a resident along with dates of residency. HMIS data is acceptable third-party verification.
3. Transitional Housing for Homeless: Written, signed, and dated verification from the transitional program on their letter head stating the individual is a resident **and** homeless verification which meets the standards listed above for shelter or street living situations stating the individuals homeless status when he or she entered the program.
4. Domestic Violence: Documentation of the original incidence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. This may be written observation by the housing or service provider; a letter or other documentation from a victim service provider, social worker, legal assistance provider, pastoral counselor, mental health provider, or other professional from whom the victim has sought assistance; current restraining order; recent court order or other court records; law enforcement report or records; communication records from the perpetrator of the violence or family members or friends of the perpetrator of the violence, including emails, voicemails, text messages, and social media posts; or a written certification by the program participant to whom the violence occurred or the head of household. **The written referral or observation need only include the minimum amount of information necessary to document that the individual or family is fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. HUD does not expect that the written referral contain specific details about the incidence(s) of violence that occurred proper to the victim fleeing, or attempting to flee.**

## **B. Disability**

1. Applicant disabilities will be verified using the Disability Verification Form attached to the Shelter Plus Care application (Form F22: SPC Application). This form must be completed by a qualified professional with one of the following credentials: MD, DO, LCPC, APRN-BC, NP, PA, psychologist, or another person licensed by the State of Maine to diagnose and treat the conditions listed on the Disability Verification Form.

### **C. Income**

1. Income, the household's annual income at application and project entry may not exceed the very low income limits, as established by the U.S Department of Urban Development (HUD). Income limits can be viewed at:

<http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il.html>

Please note that specific URL links are updated independently from the SPC program and are subject to change.