

Department of Health and Social Services

Mainstream Voucher Program

Program Overview for Sponsoring Agencies

Introduction & Background

This program began as a response to a need for affordable housing with support services for individuals with disabilities transitioning from homelessness or institutional settings. Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is characterized by availability of support services in integrated community settings coupled with safe and affordable housing. Through this partnership between DHSS and Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), individuals will be able to access rental subsidies to pair with existing DHSS-funded community support services. These vouchers are *not* time limited; however applicants are subject to screening through the AHFC Housing Choice Voucher Program Administrative Plan. Applicants that fail to meet AHFC's screening criteria will be eligible for an informal review process and exceptions *may* be made on a case-by-case basis.

Program Eligibility & Prioritization

To be eligible for this program, a person must meet the following criteria:

- a) Meet the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition of a non-elderly disabled family (24 CFR 5.403) or be an Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority beneficiary; AND
- b) Demonstrate qualification as low-income, defined as less than 50 percent of Area Median Income; AND
- c) Be eligible for community-based, long-term services as provided through Medicaid waivers, Medicaid state plan options, state funded services, or other appropriate services related to the target population [i.e. Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) funded Community Behavioral Health Services Provider, or Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS) funded provider]; AND
- d) Be currently homeless, be at risk of homelessness, transitioning from an institutional setting, or at risk of institutionalization.

Applicants must meet minimum eligibility requirements to be considered for the program. In addition, applicants must successfully pass all AHFC screening criteria. For all program and eligibility definitions, please refer to *Mainstream Voucher Program Eligibility* within the Mainstream Home Voucher Program Application Forms.

Support Services

Consumers may only access the Mainstream Voucher Program by having a Sponsoring Agency that agrees to provide services for the purpose of enhancing the consumer's ability to maintain independent living. Service providers agree to sponsor the individual and provide tenancy support services and minimum monthly check-ins to ensure long-term housing stability. By submission of the Moving Home Application, the Sponsoring Agency agrees to:

- Provide supportive housing services which will include pre-tenancy supports (e.g., housing search, assistance with rental applications, facilitation of housing unit inspections), move-in supports (e.g., assistance with move-in, assistance with purchasing/acquiring needed household items), and on-

going housing stability services (e.g., tenant rights education, assistance with proactively addressing tenancy issues, skills training, community integration)

- Provide ongoing access to a continuum of services relevant to client needs to maintain housing
- Provide active outreach and engagement if the client declines supportive housing services
- Develop a client-centered support service plan
- Provide a check-in at the client's home, at minimum once per month to ensure long-term tenancy

Supportive services can also include: medical and psychological case management; alcohol and substance abuse services; benefits advocacy and income support assistance such as SOAR, SSI, general assistance, food stamps, Medicaid, Social Security, etc.; money management/payee services; employment services such as job training and job placement; and assistance in obtaining other resources and support for consumer/tenants such as transportation, legal assistance, AIDS related services, health care, education services, etc. These services can be provided directly by the service provider or by local arrangement with other service providers.

Applicant Selection & Notification

The Mainstream Voucher Program will process applications on a first come, first served basis until all vouchers have been utilized. Upon completion of review, applicants will be notified if their application was either approved for immediate funding or denied.

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