

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES – DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
ADULT JUSTICE, HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION SERVICES**

HOUSING POLICY & DEVELOPMENT UNIT

**MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT (MHSA) HOUSING PROGRAM
TENANT REFERRAL AND CERTIFICATION PROCESS**

Application Process

Los Angeles County - Department of Mental Health (DMH) has developed a standardized MHSA Housing Program Tenant Certification Process and Application. (See attached). The application form is designed for Sections 1-5 to be completed by the referring party (i.e., shelter, jail/juvenile hall, Institutions for Mental Disease (IMDs), community mental health providers, or the project sponsor/developer). The prospective tenant should complete Section 6 indicating their housing preferences and choices as well as listing those who may be living with them in the housing. If referred by a mental health provider, DMH staff at directly operated clinics and/or the network of providers will be available to assist individuals in completing the certification application. After completion of the certification application, the form will be forwarded to the Housing Policy & Development (HP&D) Unit for processing. To ensure confidentiality and protection of health information, prospective tenants will also be asked to submit a completed release of information form, authorizing DMH to provide the certification information to the Project Sponsor/Developer or Property Management Company as units become available.

Application Review & Certification Process

HP&D Unit staff will review the application to confirm the following: that the prospective tenant is a DMH client; that they meet the eligibility criteria for MHSA services in Los Angeles County; and that they meet the definition of “homeless” or “at risk of homelessness” as defined by the MHSA Housing Program guidelines.

If the certification is denied because the prospective tenant did not meet the above criteria, the referring party and the prospective tenant will be notified and informed of the reasoning for the denial. The referring party and/or prospective tenant may resubmit the application for reconsideration if the conditions that resulted in the original denial change. If a prospective tenant does not initially meet the above criteria, they will not lose their place on the Project Sponsor/Developer’s waiting list while they attempt to alter the conditions that led to their denial. If the prospective tenant is able to successfully alter the conditions that led to their denial, upon approval by DMH they will proceed with the Project Sponsor/Developer’s own application process. If these conditions cannot be altered successfully, the Project Sponsor/Developer may then choose to allow the prospective tenant to apply for any available non-MHSA funded units in the development.

Referral List Process

Once the prospective tenant is certified to have met the threshold eligibility criteria for the MHSA Housing Program, the individual will be placed on a master Referral List maintained by the HP&D Unit. DMH will refer certified individuals to MHSA funded units based on the housing preferences identified on the Certification Application. The certified individuals are then subjected to the screening process established by each project sponsor/developer. As MHSA Housing Program units become available, the prospective tenants will be notified through the following process:

1. The Project Sponsor/Developer or Property Management Company will notify prospective tenants who have been certified by DMH and their mental health service provider or Single Fixed Point of Responsibility (SFPR) of the availability of a unit. The notice will describe the type of unit available and will alert the prospective tenant that they must respond to the Project Sponsor/Developer or Property Management Company within two weeks to indicate whether they wish to be considered for the available unit or would prefer to wait until another housing unit becomes available.
2. If the Project Sponsor/Developer or Property Management Company is unable to make contact with the prospective tenant directly or through their mental health service provider or SFPR within two weeks, they will be removed from the project's waiting list. The Project Sponsor/Developer or Property Management Company will notify the prospective tenant, their mental health service provider/SFPR and the HP&D Unit that they have been removed from the project's waiting list.
3. If a prospective tenant indicates interest in the available unit, the Project Sponsor/Developer or Property Management Company will initiate their established screening process. The mental health service provider/SFPR will make arrangements to accompany the individual to the interview and provide support with the process, unless the individual specifically declines assistance.
4. Prospective tenants may also seek tenancy in developments funded by the MHSA Housing Program by directly approaching the Project Sponsor/Developer or Property Management Company to inquire about qualifying for one of the units. In this case, the housing provider and the prospective tenant will jointly complete the Certification Application and submit to the HP&D Unit. After the certification process has been completed, the individual will be placed on the master Referral List and will be referred back to the housing provider for any additional screening.
5. The HP&D Unit will maintain the master Referral List, keeping it current by making every effort to contact prospective tenants, their case managers or the referring agency every 90 days to query their continued interest in an MHSA funded unit. If the prospective tenant is unable to be contacted within 30 working days, they will be removed from the list but they, their case managers or the referring agency may reinstate their active certification status at any time by contacting the HP&D Unit and providing updated eligibility and contact information.