

Los Angeles County - Department of Mental Health

Countywide Housing, Employment and Education Resource Development Federal Housing Subsidies Unit

SHELTER PLUS CARE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Shelter Plus Care is a services-match grant which provides subsidized housing for individuals and families that meet the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) definition of homelessness. The funds flow from HUD to the local City and County Housing Authorities. The Department of Mental Health (DMH) contracts with the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) and the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) to issue Shelter Plus Care certificates to eligible consumers receiving services from DMH directly-operated clinics or contract agencies. A current Memorandum of Understanding between the Housing Authorities allows individuals to use City and County Shelter Plus Care certificates in both jurisdictions.

Individuals must meet eligibility criteria, the HUD definition of homelessness, and minimum income requirements. DMH provides a level of supportive services equal to or greater than the dollar amount of rent paid by the Housing Authorities. Through its Shelter Plus Care contracts with HACLA and HACoLA, DMH serves approximately 602 individuals annually.

Program Objectives

To help individuals:

- Obtain and remain in permanent housing;
- Increase their skills and/or income over time;
- Achieve greater self-determination and self-sufficiency.

Eligibility Criteria

Individuals must:

- Be at least 18 years of age;
- Have a diagnosis of severe and persistent mental illness including a co-occurring substance use disorder;

- Agree to maintain active contact with the DMH system for case management and other mental health services as long as the certification is valid (at least five years);
- Have some kind of income (General Relief or some type of Social Security income, usually SSI and/or SSDI). Individuals pay 30% to 40% of their income towards the rent and the Housing Authority pays the difference. An individual's annual income must not exceed the Housing Authority's maximum limits;
- Have demonstrated an ability to live independently with supportive services;
- Understand the goals of the program including the expectation to participate in pre-employment/vocational activities;
- Have a well defined Housing Plan included in their Client Care Coordination Plan that is submitted with the Shelter Plus Care application;
- Meet HUD criteria for homelessness.

HUD Criteria for Homelessness

An individual must have resided in:

- A place not meant for human habitation such as the streets, a car, abandoned buildings, parks, bus stations, doorways, etc.;
- An emergency shelter;
- Transitional or supportive housing for homeless persons who originally came from the streets or an emergency shelter;
- Any of the above places but is spending a short time (up to 30 consecutive days) in a hospital or other institution and would otherwise sleep in the types of places described above;
- A hospital or institution longer than 30 days if there are no resources available or discharge plan in place and the individual will be homeless when discharged;
- A private dwelling and be within one week of a sheriff's eviction (has eviction papers) with no subsequent residence identified, and lacks the resources and support networks to obtain housing;

An individual also meets criteria for HUD homelessness if s/he is fleeing from domestic violence.