



## Guide to HUD “Chronic Homelessness” Definition

Individuals that meet the federal Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) definition of chronic homelessness receive prioritized access to certain services and housing opportunities linked with Home Stretch.

According to HUD, chronic homelessness means\*:

- (1) A homeless individual or head of household with a disability that meets the HUD definition of a disability who
  - (a) lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter;AND
  - (b) has been homeless and living in one of these places continuously for at least 12 months OR on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years, as long as the combined occasions equal at least 12 months and each break in homelessness separating the occasions included at least 7 consecutive nights of not living in one of the aforementioned places.

Stays in institutional care facilities for fewer than 90 days will not constitute a break in homelessness, but rather such stays are included in the 12-month total, as long as the individual was living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or an emergency shelter immediately before entering the institutional care facility. Institutional care facilities include jails, substance abuse or mental health treatment facilities, hospitals, or other similar facilities.

A family with an adult head of household (or if there is not adult in the family, a minor head of household) who meets all of the above criteria, including a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless are also considered chronically homeless.

Documentation of chronic homelessness requires:

- 1) Documentation of a client’s housing history from one or more parties via third party verification, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) records, or a client self-certification of homelessness with documentation of attempts to obtain this information that failed. *NOTE: Third-party documentation of a single encounter with a homeless service provider on a single day within 1 month is sufficient to consider an individual as homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or an emergency shelter for the entire calendar month unless there is evidence of a break.*
- 2) Documentation of a disability from a professional licensed by the state to diagnose and treat the disability and his or her certification that the disability is expected to be of long-continuing or of indefinite duration and substantially impedes the individual’s ability to live independently OR written verification from the Social Security Administration OR the receipt of a disability check. *NOTE: For Home Stretch, documentation from a licensed professional is preferable as this documentation can help qualify individuals for disability specific services and housing opportunities that the other forms of documentation may not provide.*

*\*Please note: This is an updated definition of chronic homelessness issued by HUD effective 1-15-16.*

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Contact **HOME STRETCH**

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