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Guide to Supportive Housing

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Guide to Supportive Housing

Overview

This guide is for people who may be eligible and are applying for supportive housing (also called “permanent supportive housing”), along with case managers and other staff who help clients navigate through this process. The guide includes a basic overview of the supportive housing process, general timelines, and tips to help you understand and follow the supportive housing process.

Who is supportive housing for?

Supportive housing is typically for people who have one or more significant disabilities and are currently experiencing homelessness. However, there are many different types of supportive housing programs, which serve people with different needs, and each program may have different eligibility criteria.

What is supportive housing?

Supportive housing is... housing! Tenants will sign a lease and have their own keys. Supportive housing is operated by different organizations, and a range of supportive services are available. Services are dependent on the specific supportive housing location(s) and population served. The supportive housing could be either a single or shared apartment, with a range of social services provided onsite. Tenants sign a standard lease; units are often linked to an ongoing rent subsidy to keep rent affordable. Many supportive housing programs offer services for those who have substance use or mental health issues. But additional services can be offered as well, including assistance with employment, either directly or through partnerships with other health and social service partners.

How do I get supportive housing?

The supportive housing process (described below) takes time, and there is more need for supportive housing than there is supply. The supportive housing process (described below) takes time and is dependent on eligibility and availability. Other housing and services may be pursued at the same time. For more information on the types of supportive housing available and populations served by different programs, see ***Supportive Housing Description and Criteria*** within this document:

https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nyccoc/downloads/pdf/Supportive_Housing_Types_12921.pdf.

Supportive Housing Process

There are **5 stages** to the Supportive Housing process:



Stage 1: Coordinated Assessment Survey

Step 1: Complete Coordinated Assessment Survey

People who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness are assisted by an “access point” to complete a **Coordinated Assessment Survey** (“**Survey**”). Access points include all shelter and outreach providers in New York City, as well as other community service providers, such as hospitals, jails/prisons, mental health agencies, youth service providers, and veteran service providers.

The **Survey** is submitted electronically in the Coordinated Assessment and Placement System (CAPS) by access point staff, like case managers or discharge planners. The **Survey** provides an initial screening and is used to determine whether you are *potentially* eligible for various types of housing assistance. You must provide a signed and dated consent for an access point to share your personal information and submit a **Survey** in CAPS on your behalf.

Access Point staff usually try to complete the **Survey** when first meeting someone who is homeless or at-risk of homelessness. The **Survey** takes less than 30 minutes.

Step 2: Potential Eligibility Determination

Upon submitting a **Survey**, access point staff will receive an immediate summary that shows different housing assistance you may be eligible for, including supportive housing. Eligibility review and determination specifically for supportive housing occurs as a separate step later in the application process.

Step 3: Review and Determine Next Steps

Staff assisting you will review the **Coordinated Assessment Survey** summary to determine the housing assistance you may qualify for and wish to pursue. If you are potentially eligible for supportive housing and other options, consider which option or options will best meet your needs and preferences.

Tip:

- You may have more than one option you are potentially eligible for based on the initial Coordinated Assessment Survey summary. As you are able, take time to consider options that make the most sense for you and best meet your needs.

Stage 2: NYC Supportive Housing Application

Step 1: Start to Gather Documents

If you are potentially eligible for supportive housing based on the **Coordinated Assessment Survey** and decide to apply, the application process begins with the universal **New York City (NYC) Supportive Housing Application** submitted electronically in CAPS on your behalf by a pre-approved social service or health provider.

Each new **NYC Supportive Housing Application** requires:

- 1) Signed and dated consent forms.
- 2) Information about you, including your income, housing history, medical and behavioral health conditions and needs, child welfare involvement, daily living needs, and housing preferences. Much of this information will already be available to the person assisting you and will not have to be collected again.
- 3) Psychosocial assessment dated within the last 180 days.
- 4) Other documentation based on the type of supportive housing you apply for.

Step 2: Submit New York City (NYC)

Your case manager or another staff person authorized to submit an application in the CAPS online system will assist you in completing the **NYC Supportive Housing**

Supportive Housing Application

Application (formerly called the “2010e Application”). The application determines your eligibility for multiple supportive housing options and programs and is used to understand your needs and preferences. The CAPS system also allows providers to see if you previously submitted **Supportive Housing Applications** in the last five years.

As you work on your application with your case worker, it is important to begin gathering key documents needed later for housing, such as:

- Government issued identification
- Income and asset documentation
- Proof of social security number
- Proof of date of birth and citizenship (this may include a birth certificate).

Note that proof of citizenship is only required for some types of supportive housing. You may not need all of the documents above. Some types of supportive housing can accept different types of documentation. Ask your case worker to help you to figure out what documentation is needed and to obtain these documents as soon as possible to avoid delays in the application process. If you are found eligible and offered a supportive housing option, you will need to provide additional information later in the application process.

Tip:

- Depending on the type of supportive housing you qualify for and need, you may also have to provide other documentation, such as the appropriate clinical, medical, and housing documentation or documentation of prior foster care experience. Program staff helping you with your application will guide you based on what the CAPS process indicates.

Stage 3: Eligibility Determination & Notification

Step 1: Eligibility Determination

Upon submitting a **NYC Supportive Housing Application** via CAPS, a clinical social work team from HRA reviews the application to determine if you are eligible for different supportive housing options. Applications are reviewed and an eligibility determination is made by HRA typically within 1-3 business days. In many cases, additional information will be requested, which could lengthen the process to receive final eligibility determination.

A **Standardized Vulnerability Assessment** that is based on your application and other Medicaid and homeless system data is used to help prioritize eligible clients for supportive housing.

Step 2: Eligibility Notification

Upon HRA review of your **NYC Supportive Housing Application**, the provider who submitted the application for you will receive your **NYC Supportive Housing Determination Letter through CAPS**. Review the letter closely with your case worker. The letter will indicate that your application is either complete or incomplete.

- **If your application is incomplete:** your application will be returned as “Unable to Complete.” This means your application is missing certain information or documentation to determine eligibility, as indicated in the letter. Ask your case manager for assistance to complete any missing information as soon as possible.
- **If your application is complete:** the letter will indicate if you are approved or disapproved for one or more types of supportive housing. Determination letters for approved applications also include your **Standardized Vulnerability**

Assessment category (low, medium, or high) and the city agency or nonprofit partner that will refer you to a specific supportive housing unit when available. Your case worker will be notified when an option is available.

See the **Supportive Housing Determination Letter Guide** located at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nyccoc/caps/caps.page> for guidance on the determination letter and what to do next.

Tips:

- Depending on the type of supportive housing you are eligible for and the type of unit and features you need, you may have to wait multiple months or longer for a supportive housing option to become available after you submit a completed **Supportive Housing Application**. There are a limited number of supportive housing units available in the City. **Please be patient and in the meantime pursue every housing option available to you.**
- Talk with your case worker to explore your options and make sure any supportive housing option **is right for you.**

Stage 4: Housing Referral & Placement

Step 1: Supportive Housing Unit Referral

Your case worker will be notified by the city agency or partner when there is a supportive housing unit available that you potentially qualify for and appears to meet your needs. If you want to be considered, let your case worker know, and an appointment (traditionally referred to as an interview) will be provided. These usually occur remotely via phone or internet with the supportive housing provider. If the appointment time does not work for you, let your case worker know immediately so another time can be arranged.

Step 2: Supportive Housing Viewing

When you are viewing a specific supportive housing unit, ask for information about the housing and the services being offered to ensure they meet your most important *minimum* needs. Keep in mind that there are many types of housing options, and no housing unit will meet *every* need.

Use the CUCS [Preparing for a Housing Interview: Tips for Applicants](#) to help with your housing search and to know what questions to ask a supportive housing provider with an available unit.

Step 3: After the Viewing

After the viewing, your case worker will be notified of the results.

- **If you are accepted for a unit:** The notification from the supportive housing provider will provide information on next steps. First, you will need to confirm if you accept the unit. If you do, more information and documentation may be needed to process your lease and rental subsidy. Your case worker can help.

If you turn down the unit, you will be referred to other opportunities as they are available. If you decline multiple options, your application will be further reviewed, and you may be asked to provide additional information about your needs or to consider other housing options.
- **If you are not accepted for a unit:** A unit is typically viewed by multiple qualified people, and it may be offered to someone else. If so, you will receive another supportive housing referral when an appropriate unit is available. In the meantime, continue to work on other housing options.

Step 3: Rental Assistance Application

Once you are accepted and agree to a unit offer, you will typically need to complete additional steps to obtain rental assistance. This may occur before or after you move into your new unit. Most units are subsidized with rental assistance that helps to keep your rent affordable. Supportive housing providers typically must submit rental assistance applications for each applicant.

At the appropriate time, you will be asked to provide specific documentation to obtain rental assistance, which may include:

- Government issued photo identification
- Income and asset documentation (including bank accounts and benefits award letters)
- Proof of social security number or alternative verification
- Proof of date of birth and citizenship and/or eligible immigration status (this may include a birth certificate and/or passport).

Saving hard (i.e., paper) and electronic copies of these documents will be helpful. Some requirements differ across rental subsidy programs. For example, NYC 15/15 Rental Subsidy does *not* require that applicants are citizens or have eligible immigration status, whereas federal Section 8 and certain other rental subsidies do. In addition, many supportive housing units receive tax credits to reduce rent, which requires additional documentation, such as prior tax returns.

Tips:

- Your apartment may not be ready for move-in when you are, due to repairs, inspections, etc. Check-in with your case worker regularly and let them know how to reach you when your apartment is ready or with other updates.
- **Proof of citizenship is not a requirement for some supportive housing options.** Some projects may also have different documentation requirements. Ask your case worker if you're not sure.

Stage 5: Housing Move-In

Step 1: Preparation

Once you are approved for a supportive housing unit, you will need to review and sign a lease agreement. Depending on what type of rental subsidy the unit has, you may need to be approved prior to signing a lease.

For most supportive housing units, you will have to pay your portion of first month rent and a security deposit prior to move-in. If you need financial assistance from HRA, you must have an active Cash Assistance case with HRA or have applied. Your case worker can help you apply for one-time financial assistance for initial move-in expenses, including opening a Cash Assistance case.

Note that once you apply for assistance, it may take up to 30 days for approval and assistance to be issued.

You will also need to have any utilities you are responsible for turned on in your name or another qualified household member's name. If you are responsible for one or more utilities, like gas or cable, use your signed lease to apply for utilities to be turned on. As needed, ask your case worker for help.

If you have belongings in storage, make arrangements to obtain them and ask about help with storage and moving fees, as needed. Let your case worker or supportive housing program staff know if you will have any immediate needs when you move into your new apartment, like help to obtain cookware, a microwave, food, etc. Some units come with furnishings and household items, while others do not. Some units may require that only their furnishings are used.

Step 2: Move-In and Initial Stabilization

Moving into a new apartment can be stressful. Supportive housing staff will help orient you to the neighborhood, services they offer, and other supports available to help you establish your new home. Let staff know if you have urgent needs or are unclear about anything.

Tip:

- Once you have a supportive housing unit and move-in, the services and supports available to you will vary based on location, provider, and your individual needs. Some programs have very comprehensive services on-site and others have basic case management and housing supports. Let supportive housing staff know if you have a critical need and ask for help to connect to an available support. If they do not have a service on-site, they will help you find an appropriate and accessible support in the community.

Additional Information and Resources

- **Coordinated Assessment and Placement System**
 - <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nyccoc/caps/caps.page>
- **Glossary of Terms**
 - https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nyccoc/downloads/pdf/CAPS_Glossary_12721_final.pdf
- **Supportive Housing Initiatives & Populations Served**
 - <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/services/supportive-housing/SupportiveHousingInitiatives.pdf>
- **Supportive Housing Description and Criteria**
 - https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nyccoc/downloads/pdf/Supportive_Housing_Types_12921.pdf
- **Supportive Housing Tenant's Notice of Rights Template**
 - <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/home/supportive-housing-tenants-rights.pdf>