

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS FACT SHEET #1 :: The Basics

What is the effective date of the new Chronically Homeless rule?

The new definition for “chronically homeless” and all of the documentation requirements (together = the Chronic Homeless Rule) went into effect January 15, 2016.

Who has to comply with the new Chronically Homeless rule?

The Chronic Homeless Rule applies to all recipients and subrecipients of Continuum of Care (CoC) Programs which include the following: Emergency Solutions Grants, Transitional Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing Programs.

What is the new Chronically Homeless definition?

- 1) A “homeless individual with a disability,” as defined as one who:
 - Lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and
 - Has been homeless continuously for at least twelve (12) months or on at least four (4) separate occasions in the last three (3) years *where the combined occasions must total at least twelve (12) months; or*
- 2) An individual who has been residing in an institutional care facility for fewer than ninety (90) days and met all of the criteria in paragraph one (1) of this definition, before entering that facility; or
- 3) A family with an adult head of household (or if there is no adult in the family, a minor head of household) who meets all of the criteria in paragraph one (1) or two (2) of this definition, including a family who composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless.

How do we ensure compliance within our agency with the new Chronically Homeless Definition?

- The City of New Bedford’s Department of Planning, Housing & Community Development (DPHCD) has developed a Chronically Homeless Certification form that will guide agency staff through intake and documentation steps to ensure compliance with the new definition.
- Programs using HMIS will also have to comply with the new definition.

How does the coordinated entry system fit into the new Chronically Homeless definition?

- The New Bedford Continuum of Care has agreed to a single point of entry for all homeless individuals and families. Our coordinated entry system is referred to as “THE CALL”
- “THE CALL” will maintain a waiting list of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The coordinated entry process prioritizes or ensures that the people with the greatest need based on the vulnerability index receive priority for any type of housing and homeless assistance available in the CoC, including Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and other CoC programs.
- Individuals and families documented as being Chronically Homeless will receive priority for housing, services and programs.

If I am entering clients into HMIS, will I need to use the new Chronic Homeless definition?

- YES – Both Housing Works and Simtech Solutions have already incorporated the new Chronic Homeless definition and questions into their data fields.
- Once the new 4.1 Data Standards are released by HUD in the next few weeks, Simtech Solutions will be providing a training to comply with the new data standards and a focus on the new Chronically Homeless definition.

Will DPHCD be providing any future information or guidance related to Chronic Homelessness?

- YES – HUD is scheduled to provide additional guidance and materials related to the new Chronic Homeless definition in the near future. As information becomes available, DPHCD will review and forward to all Continuum of Care Programs.
- DPHCD staff is always available to answer any questions about the new Chronic Homeless Definition.