



What is the new definition of “Chronic Homelessness” according to HUD?

In 2010 the Obama Administration released *Opening Doors: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* and set the goal to finish the job of ending chronic homelessness by 2015 (this goal has since been extended to 2017).

In December 2015, HUD published the Final Rule on Defining “Chronically Homeless”. Continuum of Care (CoC) recipients must comply with the regulations promulgated by this rule as of January 15, 2016.

The quick definition of chronic homelessness is now:

A “chronically homeless” individual is defined to mean a homeless individual with a disability who lives either in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter, or in an institutional care facility if the individual has been living in the facility for fewer than 90 days and had been living in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter immediately before entering the institutional care facility. In order to meet the “chronically homeless” definition, the individual also must have been living as described above continuously for at least 12 months, or on at least four separate occasions in the last 3 years, where the combined occasions total a length of time of at least 12 months. Each period separating the occasions must include at least 7 nights of living in a situation other than a place not meant for human habitation, in an emergency shelter, or in a safe haven.

Chronically homeless families are families with adult heads of household who meet the definition of a chronically homeless individual. If there is no adult in the family, the family would still be considered chronically homeless if a minor head of household meets all the criteria of a chronically homeless individual. A chronically homeless family includes those whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless.

Recipients and subrecipients of Continuum of Care Program funds are required to maintain and follow written intake procedures to ensure compliance with the “chronically homeless” definition. The procedures must establish the order of priority for obtaining evidence as third-party documentation first, intake worker observations second, and certification from the individual seeking assistance third.

The FINAL RULE establishing this definition is available in its entirety on the HUD exchange website at:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/4847/hearth-defining-chronically-homeless-final-rule/>

The information provided here is only excerpted from the final rule; it is not intended to disclose all aspects of the rule, itself.