

2023 Consolidated Supportive Housing Placement Guidance

Mayor Adams' [Housing Our Neighbors: A Blueprint for Housing and Homelessness](#), includes a commitment to eliminating unnecessary obstacles New Yorkers face to obtain housing. The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), Human Resources Administration (HRA), and Housing Development Corporation (HDC) have been working on ways to reduce barriers specifically to supportive housing so that New York's most vulnerable people are able to exit homelessness and move to stable housing with easily accessible services.

Supportive Housing in NYC can be accessed through the Coordinated Access and Placement System (CAPS). Applications are reviewed for eligibility by clinicians from the HRA Office of Supportive/Affordable Housing and Services (OSAHS) team. This team issues a Determination Letter to the applicant, which specifies the type of program for which the applicant is eligible. Eligible applicants will then be referred through the CAPS system to programs for placement.

This document serves to consolidate guidance around supportive housing policies for providers to reference throughout the placement process. This guidance applies to all supportive housing placements referred by HRA and going into HPD or HDC financed housing. This guidance also applies to service providers contracted by DOHMH and HRA. HRA and DOHMH (the "contracting agencies") may provide additional guidance applicable to supportive housing services beyond the placement process described in this document. This document will be updated periodically and recirculated when changes are made.

Referrals Overview

- HRA will select prospective tenants for referral to available supportive housing units based on the following factors:
 - The Determination Letter issued by the OSAHS team, specifying the supportive housing category for which the prospective tenant is eligible (e.g., 15/15 single adult, ESSHI substance use disorder, NY/NY III Pop F)
 - The Standardized Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) included within the NYC Supportive Housing application (2010e). Prospective tenants with SVAs of "High" are prioritized
 - Length of time the prospective tenant has been homeless
 - Prospective tenant's needs and preferences (e.g., borough, elevator building)

- Prospective tenant's recent referral history. If a prospective tenant already has an upcoming referral, the HRA Office of Supportive Affordable/Housing & Services (OSAHS) will refer someone who does not currently have a referral.
- Referrals will only consider specific eligibility criteria, such as age or gender, when the supportive housing unit is subject to a regulatory or contractual agreement that requires selection based on those criteria.
- HRA will schedule up to three eligible prospective tenants per unit. If the homeless services provider notifies OSAHS that a selected prospective tenant cannot make the appointment, OSAHS will refer a new eligible prospective tenant, provided there is enough notice.

Appointments and Apartment Viewings

- Prospective tenants may be required to attend appointments with the managing agent to provide documents to confirm eligibility for tax credit programs, rental subsidy, or other applicable affordable housing program. Providers are expected to explain the housing requirements to the prospective tenant to ensure the prospective tenant understands the required documents.
- As per the Apartment Viewing Guidance put forth by DOHMH in the spring of 2022, providers may **not** use these appointments or the apartment viewing as an opportunity to assess the prospective tenant's clinical eligibility. HRA's OSAHS team has already determined that the prospective tenant meets the clinical criteria and is eligible for the supportive housing unit for which they have been referred.
 - Concerns related to the prospective tenant's "insight" into their mental illness are not relevant to the apartment viewing.
- All City-contracted supportive housing providers are expected to offer any prospective tenant an opportunity to view the available unit for which they have been referred in-person before the prospective tenant decides to sign a lease and move into the unit.
- DOHMH expects contracted supportive housing providers to accept a prospective tenant if, after the unit viewing, the prospective tenant indicates that they want to live there.
 - If multiple prospective tenants attend an apartment viewing, the provider must offer the unit first to the person with the longest history of homelessness.
- Providers should reschedule the unit viewing if the prospective tenant appears unable to fully participate due to impairment from being under the influence of drugs or alcohol during the apartment viewing.

NYC Supportive Housing Determination Letter Clarifications

- Services that are “recommended” or “to be considered” are not required for the prospective tenant to live in the housing for which they were approved. These recommendations are intended to complement the housing provider’s intake and tenant service planning process.
- When “medication support” is included as a recommended service, the housing provider should inquire how medication may relate to the tenant’s personal goals as a part of the housing provider’s intake and tenant service planning process. This term does not mean medication supervision or management is needed by the prospective tenant.
- Prospective tenants can only be rejected in accordance with the contracting agency’s procedures. All rejection reasons must be detailed in CAPS.
 - Some reasons that could warrant rejecting a prospective tenant are:
 - Prospective tenant does not meet the unit’s funding or contractual requirements
 - Prospective tenant’s income exceeds the maximum income limit for unit
 - Building/unit does not have features needed by the prospective tenant (roll in shower, elevator, etc.)
 - Single unit filled by another prospective tenant
 - Some rejection reasons that are not permissible are:
 - Prospective tenant does not acknowledge their mental illness
 - Prospective tenant is not truthful during interview about mental health or substance use
 - Prospective tenant uses substances
 - Prospective tenant does not currently take prescribed medications
 - A reason related to a protected class under [Fair Housing Law](#)

Intake Policies / Practices

- Background and credit checks are NOT permitted. City-contracted supportive housing providers working with third party management companies must ensure that the management company does not conduct a credit or background check of prospective tenants, and that any applications they may use do not contain sections or ask any questions related to credit, housing court history, or previous involvement with the criminal justice system. See the *Memorandum on Low Barrier Admission Policies* for further guidance.
- All parties should collect the least number of documents required to establish tenant eligibility for rental assistance and/or tax credit compliance. Please see [HPD/HDC’s documentation chart](#) for clarification as to what is needed for various forms of rental assistance and tax code units.