

**Permanent Supportive Housing Program (PSHP)
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
December 2024**

This FAQ document is a public-facing tool through which the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) address commonly asked questions from providers and other program partners, offer up-to-date guidance on program implementation, and support transparency and consistency across programmatic activities.

This document will be updated periodically to incorporate additional questions, new guidance, and/or further details or clarification. The date at the top of the document will reflect the date of the most recent update.

The PSHP Program

Q1. What is the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) Permanent Supportive Housing Program (PSHP)?

The OBH Permanent Supportive Housing Program (PSHP) is a program funded by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program. PSHP is designed to provide rental assistance and supportive services to assist households with at least one member (adult or child) with a disability in achieving housing stability. The program is designed to meet the needs of Maine's most vulnerable people and acceptance into the PSHP requires applicants and participants to be matched to available resources, to score highly in a Coordinated Entry (CE) assessment, and to meet MaineCare (Maine's Medicaid program) eligibility requirements.

Providing individuals with appropriate services to maintain housing stability and connecting them to the Medicaid system is a nationally recognized best practice. You can learn more about how Continuum of Care (CoCs) and Coordinated Entry systems do align and coordinate Medicaid funded pre-tenancy and tenancy-sustaining services at these sites:

- [Medicaid & Permanent Supportive Housing: A Quick Guide for Health Centers](#)
- [Medicaid-Funded Housing Services](#)
- [A Primer on Using Medicaid for People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness and Tenants in Permanent Supportive Housing](#)
- [Medicaid and Permanent Supportive Housing for Chronically Homeless Individuals: Emerging Practices From the Field](#)

Q2. Are most PSHP applicants also eligible for MaineCare?

Yes. Eligibility across the two programs aligns for the large majority of individuals. Providing individuals with appropriate services to maintain housing stability and connecting them to the Medicaid system is a nationally recognized best practice. Individuals with a qualifying prioritization score for the PSHP should meet MaineCare eligibility, and it'd likely be a rare case where they do not.

Q3. Does the PSHP follow a Housing First model?

Yes. The Housing First model promotes a pairing of housing assistance with supportive services; they are offered together, not one before or without the other. It is an evidence-based model that supports those

with a long history of homelessness to accept and maintain housing. Information about Housing First in Permanent Supportive Housing projects can be found here:

- [Housing First in Permanent Supportive Housing Brief](#)

Q4. Is the PSHP person-centered?

Yes. The PSHP serves individuals who meet HUD's definition of [homelessness](#) and who have a disability that is long-continuing, or indefinite in duration that substantially impedes the individual's ability to live independently. Each PSHP participant has access to MaineCare services if and when they need them. Access and choice are important principles of the model: PSHP participants have access to supported services even if they choose not to use them and when they do choose to use them, they can choose from among a wide range of MaineCare supportive services to meet their unique needs.

Accessing PSHP resources

Q5. How does the PSHP accept referrals?

The PSHP accepts referrals exclusively from Maine's Coordinated Entry system in alignment with Maine's Continuum of Care's (MCoC) order of priority. For more information on the referral and application process please consult the [PSH Referral Policies & Procedures](#) in the Maine Coordinated Entry System Policies and Procedures.

Q6. How does an individual get referred to the PSHP?

The first step is to complete a Coordinated Entry assessment. These are available at Coordinated Entry access points throughout the State. They are typically libraries, shelters, outreach workers, and community homeless service providers. Through these access points, an individual completes the Coordinated Entry assessment and the individual is entered into the Coordinated Entry project in HUD's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The Coordinated Entry system assesses, prioritizes, and refers individuals to the PSHP based on an assessment score that reflects length of homelessness, housing barriers, and safety and immediate need. When there are PSHP resources available, a Coordinated Entry Hub Coordinator matches the individual to the appropriate available resource and contacts the individual's case manager.

Most applicants are already connected to a case manager when they complete an assessment; when they are not, the Coordinated Entry Hub Coordinator will use case conferencing to create a plan to support the individual with the application process, per the [PSH Referral Policies & Procedures](#) in the Maine Coordinated Entry System Policies and Procedures.

Q7. What happens after an individual has been matched to PSHP?

Once the individual has been matched, the individual completes a PSHP program application. Applications can be found on the website of PSHP's Central Administrative Agency (CAA), which is [Shalom House Inc](#) or by calling them at 207-874-1080. The application can also be found on the [OBH website](#). Applications should be submitted to Shalom House within 15 business days of the match. For more information on the referral and application process please consult the [PSH Referral Policies & Procedures](#) in the Maine Coordinated Entry System Policies and Procedures.

Q8. How are PSHP resources allocated within Coordinated Entry?

The Central Administrative Agency (CAA) will notify Coordinated Entry Hub Coordinators of available resources as they become available and financial capacity is confirmed. You can find more information about the PSHP's resource allocation process here: [PSHP Resource Allocation Policy](#)

Client Eligibility

Q9. Who is eligible for PSHP rental assistance?

The criteria for eligibility for PSHP rental assistance are:

1. The individual must be homeless, as defined by [The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act As Amended by S.896 The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing \(HEARTH\) Act of 2009 \(hud.gov\)](#) as funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [42 USC 11302]. The PSHP only accepts applicants who are literally homeless or fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence.
2. The individual must have a qualifying disability as defined by HUD and must provide disability verification by completing the DHHS Disability Verification form included in the [PSHP Application](#), providing written verification from the Social Security Administration (SSA) of a qualifying disability, provide a copy of a statement showing that the applicant is the recipient of a disability check such as Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Veteran Disability Compensation, or provide written observation(s) from housing intake staff of a qualifying disability. For intake staff verification, the disability must be confirmed within 45 days by providing one of the other forms of verification mentioned above. HUD qualifying disabilities include:
 - A. Physical, mental or emotional impairment, including impairment caused by alcohol or including impairment caused by a substance use disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, brain injury or a chronic physical illness that:
 - Is expected to be long-continuing or of indefinite duration; **and**
 - Substantially impedes the person's ability to live independently; **and**
 - Could be improved by more suitable housing.
 - B. Developmental disability as defined in Section 102 of the [Developmental Disability Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000](#) . In essence, this means a severe, chronic disability that:
 - Is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination; **and**
 - Is manifested before age 22; **and**
 - Is likely to continue indefinitely; **and**
 - Results in substantial limitations in three or more major life activities, **and**
 - Self-care
 - Receptive and expressive language
 - Learning
 - Mobility
 - Self-direction

- Capacity for independent living
- Economic self-sufficiency
- Reflects need for:
 - A combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary or generic services; **or**
 - Individualized supports; **or**
 - Other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

C. Diagnosis of HIV/AIDS

3. HUD requires that PSHP housing assistance and supportive services are provided to households to achieve housing stability. OBH and the Office of MaineCare Services (OMS) have formally committed to providing supportive services to PSHP participants through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Supportive services are covered by MaineCare and this allows for all participants to access care for the duration of their residence in the project as required by HUD.

If an individual is not eligible for the PSHP, they may qualify for other Maine housing support programs available through Maine Housing, OBH, municipalities, and local community providers.

Q10. What is MaineCare and who is eligible?

MaineCare is Maine’s Medicaid program. MaineCare provides free and low-cost health insurance to Mainers who have limited income and assets. It helps to ensure that all people in Maine are able to access the critical health services, both preventative and emergency, that enable them to live healthy, safe, and resilient lives.

MaineCare eligibility is determined by the criteria set forth in the [MaineCare Eligibility Manual](#). Information about eligibility requirements and how individuals can apply for MaineCare can be found on the [Office for Family Independence website](#).

Q11. Is there an income threshold for PSHP participation?

The PSHP does not have an income threshold. MaineCare eligibility does have an income threshold: it provides free and low-cost health insurance to Mainers who have limited income and assets.

Eligibility across the two programs aligns for the large majority of individuals. Individuals with a qualifying prioritization score for the PSHP should meet MaineCare eligibility, and it’d likely be a rare case where they do not.

There are some instances where individuals may qualify for MaineCare even if they are above the income threshold. Please refer to the [Office of Family Independence](#) for more information on eligibility guidelines and MaineCare coverage categories.

Q12. How can someone determine if an individual person is already enrolled in MaineCare and covered for behavioral health services?

If the individual has a MaineCare ID and you are a MaineCare provider, you can log into the MaineCare Provider Portal and use the MaineCare ID to verify coverage. Additional MaineCare provider resources can be found here: [MaineCare Provider Resources](#).

If the individual has a MaineCare ID and you are not a MaineCare provider, you can contact MaineCare member services at 1-800-977-6740 or contact the Office for Family Independence at 1-855-797-4357 to verify coverage. As part of the process, the MaineCare member will have to complete an [Authorization to Release Information](#) form for a housing provider to submit to the Office being contacted to verify coverage (e.g. the Office of MaineCare Services and/or the Office for Family Independence).

If the individual does not have a MaineCare ID, providers can direct clients to [community resources](#) to assist the client in applying. Providers can also support the client in applying through the [My Maine Connection Website](#) or by calling the Office for Family Independence at 1-855-797-4357, or by visiting any local [DHHS District Office](#). MaineCare eligibility assessments will be completed by the Office of Family Independence according to their standard process.

Q13. If an individual is enrolled in the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB) or the Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary (SLMB) program, are they eligible for PSHP?

Individuals who are enrolled in QMB and SLMB would not be considered eligible for the PSHP since they are not eligible for MaineCare.

Q14. If an individual is enrolled in Medicare are they eligible for PSHP?

An individual would be considered eligible for PSHP if they are enrolled in both Medicare and MaineCare and meet all other program eligibility requirements.

Q15. Does a PSHP participant need to maintain their MaineCare eligibility status to remain on PSHP?

Maintaining MaineCare eligibility ensures a participant has access to supportive services throughout their duration in the program as required by HUD. This is consistent with nationally recognized best practice and Housing First principles.

If an individual who is housed through PSHP becomes ineligible for MaineCare, PSHP will work with Coordinated Entry and the community to connect the individual to suitable support and housing resources.

Supportive Services

Q16. How does the PSHP connect applicants to supportive services?

The PSHP application asks individuals directly if they need supportive services and what kind of services they might be interested in. If the individual is awarded a PSHP resource, then the CAA will work to connect the individual to the services identified on their application. If an applicant is not eligible for PSHP, Coordinated Entry will work with the community to connect the individual to suitable supportive services and housing resources.

Q17. If an individual is not eligible for MaineCare, how might they access behavioral health services?

If an individual is denied MaineCare, there may be other ways to financially support their care. Please visit the [Office of Behavioral Health's](#) website to find behavioral healthcare agencies in the community who can help.

Q18. How can an individual client access MaineCare case management services?

An individual can apply for MaineCare membership through the Office of Family Independence. An individual MaineCare member can self-refer to a behavioral health agency by providing basic demographic information (e.g. name, DOB, insurance type and address).

A provider can call a behavioral health agency and refer an individual for case management services. Behavioral health agencies are required to accept ALL referrals for Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), Community Integration (CI), and Adult Behavioral Health Homes (BHH), all of which include some form of case management services.

You can find more information about these and other case management services (including Targeted Case Management and the Housing Outreach and Member Engagement program) and service eligibility requirements within the [MaineCare Benefits Manual](#).

To apply to become a Community Care Team, HOME, BHH or Opioid Health Home provider and see a list of current providers, please visit: [Health Homes landing page](#).

Q19. What happens when an individual is placed on a waitlist for behavioral health services?

If an agency does not have capacity to provide same-day access to an intake assessment for ACT, CI and Adult BHH services then an individual seeking services may be placed on a waitlist. The agency is required by MaineCare policy to contact waitlisted individuals at a minimum of every 30 days to verify that they would still like to hold for services. Additional information about the Hold for Service (HFS) process including an overview of the HFS workflow, and Frequently Asked Questions about the process can be found here:

- a. *Additional Training Presentation:* [HFS Provider Training](#)
- b. *Frequently Asked Questions:* [HFS FAQ's](#)

For other MaineCare based behavioral health services, agencies may maintain their own internal waitlists which are not required by policy to have Department oversight.

Q20. Where can I find more information about how to connect individuals to MaineCare services?

More information about getting connected to MaineCare based services can be found on the Office of MaineCare Services website: [Member Resources | Department of Health and Human Services \(maine.gov\)](#)