

SERVICES TO END AND PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

Residency Eligibility for Homeless Services Programs

This document guides the mandated changes to the residency policy per project and population type. Please reference the revised policies below to update the respective project and program manuals and guidelines.

The policy removes mention of durational requirements for residency. A household may be considered a resident regardless of how long they have resided in Montgomery County or where they lost housing.

The term household is used in this document to refer to an adult-only household (individual), a household with multiple adults, or a household with minor children.

PREVENTION

Housing Stabilization Services. Update the County Emergency Services Grant Manual Section C.2. Remove “for at least 3 months” and “for the past 6 months.”

Section C.2. Living in Montgomery County –Households must live in Montgomery County to be considered for assistance. Documentation verifying housing includes one of the following:

- a. A Lease in Montgomery County—the applicant can be listed as either a leaseholder or an occupant.
- b. Verification of home ownership.
- c. If the applicant is not listed on a lease or homeowner, provide evidence that the household resides in Montgomery. To determine where the applicant is residing, review the following:
 - i. Children registered in Montgomery County School
 - ii. Utilities in name at that address
 - iii. Official Mail received at that address.
 - iv. Pay stubs – address listed.
 - v. Address listed on tax records.
 - vi. Driver's license and other official documentation
 - vii. Notarized letter from where the applicant has been residing.
 - viii. Other documentation with review and approval of the Supervisor.

DIVERSION

Households with children

Households with children must be considered homeless under the HUD categories 1, 2, and 4 (see attachment). Households under category 4 (fleeing Domestic Violence/Human Trafficking) **do not** have to demonstrate residency in Montgomery County.

Households may receive **some** diversion services regardless of where they lost housing. Please refer to the Housing Stabilization Services County Emergency Services Grant Manual to determine eligibility for specific diversion services.

Staff providing diversion services must complete an assessment to determine the household's needs and whether it resides in Montgomery County or would be best served in a different jurisdiction. The

provider must then make an effort to connect the household to services that will divert it from shelter or unsheltered homelessness.

Households with minor children experiencing unsheltered homelessness (Category 1) in Montgomery County and unable to identify a safe alternative to shelter should be referred to an emergency shelter. Please inform households at the time of referral that they must demonstrate residency in Montgomery County to be eligible for emergency shelter. Documentation may be provided **after** shelter entry but within five business days.

Adult-Only Households

Adult-only households must be considered homeless under the HUD categories 1 and 4 (see attachment). Households under category 4 (fleeing Domestic Violence/Human Trafficking) **do not** have to demonstrate residency in Montgomery County.

Households may receive diversion services regardless of where they lost housing if they demonstrate they reside in Montgomery County when they apply for and receive these services.

Staff providing diversion services must complete an assessment to determine the individual's needs and whether the individual resides in Montgomery County or would be best served in a different jurisdiction. The provider must make an effort to connect the individual to services to divert them from shelter or unsheltered homelessness. If diversion is not possible, staff may refer the individual to an emergency shelter after they explain the eligibility for shelter policy. Please inform individuals at the time of referral that they must demonstrate residency in Montgomery County to be eligible for emergency shelter. Documentation may be provided **after** shelter entry but within five business days.

Residency Documentation

At least **two items** below are needed to verify residency in Montgomery County. Staff should assist households in obtaining the necessary documentation and make every attempt to minimize barriers to diversion or shelter entry. Please inform Households at the time of referral to a shelter that they must demonstrate residency in Montgomery County to be eligible for emergency shelter. Documentation may be provided after shelter entry but within five business days.

List of possible determining factors and documentation:

- Receiving benefits (including health insurance) from Montgomery County
- Photo ID showing a Montgomery County address.
- Government or utility mail showing a Montgomery County address.
- Documentation of last (most recent) place of residency.
- Children currently in physical and legal custody enrolled in Montgomery County Public Schools (households with children only).
- Eviction notice (informal or formal) for a residential unit located in Montgomery County.
- Pay stubs or proof of employment in Montgomery County.

- Legal document explaining mandate to remain in Montgomery County.

Transparency and outlining clear program expectations with program participants are essential to providing Trauma-Informed Services. Please explain this policy to program participants before program entry, during intake, and as needed.

OUTREACH

No changes. All persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Montgomery County are eligible for outreach services regardless of where they lost housing or for how long they have resided and experienced unsheltered homelessness in the county.

EMERGENCY SHELTER

Households with Children

To be eligible for emergency shelter services:

Households with children must be considered homeless under the HUD categories 1 and 4 (see attachment). Households under category 4 (fleeing Domestic Violence/Human Trafficking) **do not** have to demonstrate residency in Montgomery County.

Diversion options must be explored, pursued, and documented before referring a household to an emergency shelter.

Staff must conduct an assessment to determine whether a household is residing in Montgomery County. At least two of the below are needed to verify residency in Montgomery County. Staff should assist households in obtaining the necessary documentation and make every attempt to minimize barriers to shelter entry. Please inform households at the time of referral that they must demonstrate residency in Montgomery County to be eligible for emergency shelter. Documentation may be provided after shelter entry but within five business days.

List of possible determining factors and documentation:

- Receiving benefits (including health insurance) from Montgomery County
- Photo ID showing a Montgomery County address.
- Government or utility mail showing a Montgomery County address.
- Documentation of last (most recent) place of residency.
- Children currently in physical and legal custody enrolled in Montgomery County Public Schools.
- Eviction notice (informal or formal) for a residential unit located in Montgomery County.
- Pay stubs or proof of employment in Montgomery County.
- Legal document explaining mandate to remain in Montgomery County.

If the household does not provide these documents, the provider and household will create a rapid exit from the shelter plan. The provider must make an effort to connect the household to services to ensure they are not discharged to unsheltered homelessness. A household may not be terminated from a shelter program if it has not secured a safe alternative to shelter.

Transparency and outlining clear program expectations with program participants are essential to providing Trauma-Informed Services. Please explain this policy to program participants before program entry and during intake.

Adult-Only Households

To be eligible for emergency shelter services:

Adult-only households must be considered homeless under the HUD categories 1 and 4 (see attachment). Households under category 4 (fleeing Domestic Violence/Human Trafficking) **do not** have to demonstrate residency in Montgomery County.

Emergency shelters that provide shelter due to inclement weather (hypothermia or hyperthermia) may serve all Households seeking shelter regardless of their residency in Montgomery County.

Diversion options should be explored, pursued, and documented before referring a household to an emergency shelter and after shelter entry.

Staff must conduct an assessment to determine whether a household resides in Montgomery County. At least two of the below are needed to verify residency in Montgomery County. Staff should assist households in obtaining the necessary documentation and make every attempt to minimize barriers to shelter entry. Please inform households at the time of referral that they must demonstrate residency in Montgomery County to be eligible for emergency shelter. Documentation may be provided after shelter entry but within five business days.

List of possible determining factors and documentation:

- Receiving benefits (including health insurance) from Montgomery County
- Photo ID showing a Montgomery County address.
- Government or utility mail showing a Montgomery County address.
- Documentation of last (most recent) place of residency.
- Eviction notice (informal or formal) for a residential unit located in Montgomery County.
- Pay stubs or proof of employment in Montgomery County.
- Legal document explaining mandate to remain in Montgomery County.
- Experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Montgomery County.

If the individual does not provide these documents, the provider and individual will create a rapid exit from the shelter plan. The provider must make an effort to connect the individual to services to ensure they have access to resources that meet their basic needs.

Transparency and outlining clear program expectations with program participants are essential to providing Trauma-Informed Services. Please explain this policy to program participants before program entry and during intake.

COORDINATED ENTRY - HOUSING

Households eligible for housing through the continuum of care programs may be added to the Coordinated Entry List for housing matches once their residency documentation is uploaded to HMIS regardless of where they lost housing and for how long they have resided in Montgomery County.

To be eligible for assistance through Continuum of Care programs providing Rapid Rehousing Assistance (RRH) or Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), referring providers must demonstrate that the program participant resides in Montgomery County and is not better served in another jurisdiction.

All other eligibility requirements remain the same.



Homeless Definition

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING HOMELESS	Category 1	Literally Homeless	<p>(1) Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation; (ii) Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); <u>or</u> (iii) Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less <u>and</u> who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution
	Category 2	Imminent Risk of Homelessness	<p>(2) Individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance; (ii) No subsequent residence has been identified; <u>and</u> (iii) The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing
	Category 3	Homeless under other Federal statutes	<p>(3) Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Are defined as homeless under the other listed federal statutes; (ii) Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application; (iii) Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during in the preceding 60 days; <u>and</u> (iv) Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time due to special needs or barriers
	Category 4	Fleeing/ Attempting to Flee DV	<p>(4) Any individual or family who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence; (ii) Has no other residence; <u>and</u> (iii) Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing



Homeless Definition

RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS



RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS	Category 1	Literally Homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written observation by the outreach worker; <u>or</u> Written referral by another housing or service provider; <u>or</u> Certification by the individual or head of household seeking assistance stating that (s)he was living on the streets or in shelter; For individuals exiting an institution—one of the forms of evidence above <u>and</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> discharge paperwork <u>or</u> written/oral referral, <u>or</u> written record of intake worker's due diligence to obtain above evidence <u>and</u> certification by individual that they exited institution
	Category 2	Imminent Risk of Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A court order resulting from an eviction action notifying the individual or family that they must leave; <u>or</u> For individual and families leaving a hotel or motel—evidence that they lack the financial resources to stay; <u>or</u> A documented and verified oral statement; <u>and</u> Certification that no subsequent residence has been identified; <u>and</u> Self-certification or other written documentation that the individual lack the financial resources and support necessary to obtain permanent housing
	Category 3	Homeless under other Federal statutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certification by the nonprofit or state or local government that the individual or head of household seeking assistance met the criteria of homelessness under another federal statute; <u>and</u> Certification of no PH in last 60 days; <u>and</u> Certification by the individual or head of household, and any available supporting documentation, that (s)he has moved two or more times in the past 60 days; <u>and</u> Documentation of special needs <u>or</u> 2 or more barriers
	Category 4	Fleeing/ Attempting to Flee DV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>For victim service providers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An oral statement by the individual or head of household seeking assistance which states: they are fleeing; they have no subsequent residence; and they lack resources. Statement must be documented by a self-certification or a certification by the intake worker. <i>For non-victim service providers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral statement by the individual or head of household seeking assistance that they are fleeing. This statement is documented by a self-certification or by the caseworker. Where the safety of the individual or family is not jeopardized, the oral statement must be verified; <u>and</u> Certification by the individual or head of household that no subsequent residence has been identified; <u>and</u> Self-certification, or other written documentation, that the individual or family lacks the financial resources and support networks to obtain other permanent housing.