Institutional Discharge Planning Toolkit

Purpose of Toolkit

To facilitate coordination between discharge planners in state institutions and the networks of housing and service providers operating to assist people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

In particular, the tools are intended to assist discharge planners:

1. Determine whether clients are homeless and, if so, chronically homelessness, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), for the purpose of determining certain housing program eligibility.[1]
2. Document clients' homeless and chronic homeless status to meet requirements set by HUD.
3. Refer clients to homeless assistance/housing system:
    - Connect client to Coordinated Entry system in the region to which (s)he will be discharged and ensure a smooth hand-off by providing the Coordinated Entry system with pertinent client information and documentation.
4. Understand alternative housing options in the event Coordinated Entry does not provide a sufficient avenue for determining adequate post-discharge housing.

Background: Connecting with the Homeless Assistance Housing and Services System

Continuums of Care

If a client will not have housing upon discharge from an institution, (s)he may be eligible for housing assistance through the network of Continuums of Care operating in the same region. A Continuum of Care (CoC) is a is a regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding and programs for homeless families and individuals. The number of CoCs operating in each state varies. More information on CoCs – including contact information for CoCs operating in a given area - is available at: www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/.

Coordinated Entry

Each CoC around the country has been tasked by HUD to implement a Coordinated Entry System. Coordinated Entry describes a system-wide approach to coordinate the access, assessment, prioritization, referral and delivery of homeless housing and services consistently within a Continuum of Care. Previously, individual service providers were responsible for assessing and placing clients directly into their programs. Coordinated Entry replaces this patchwork of policies, waitlists, and practices with a universal assessment and prioritization process that ensures all clients are treated equally regardless of which agency he or she seeks assistance from.

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[1] Discharge planners are not expected to make those eligibility determinations themselves. However, information collected by discharge planners about homeless or chronically homeless status will assist housing-system staff to make eligibility determinations.

Coordinated Entry Systems are in various stages of development and implementation.

Connecting Institutional Discharge Planning to Coordinated Entry

Coordinated Entry Systems all prioritize assistance based on client vulnerability and severity of service needs to ensure that people who need assistance the most can receive it in a timely manner. Each CoC has flexibility to choose its own assessment tool make the necessary determinations regarding each client's vulnerability and needs. Assessment tools are also used to determine eligibility for various programs.

In some states, all CoCs may use the same or similar assessment tools. In others, each CoC may use a different tool. Regardless of the assessment tool(s) used, there is a small subset of information that every Coordinated Entry System needs to know about each potential client. Therefore, it is possible for discharge planners to get a jumpstart on the assessment process for clients that need to be connected to a CoC, regardless of the jurisdiction to which they will be discharged.

Specifically, all CoCs must know whether or not a client is homeless or chronically homeless according to HUD's definition, and have proper documentation of that status. All CoCs also require some basic information about the client, such as name and age. The **Assessment Tool for Discharging Institutional Clients with Housing Needs** gathers this information.

Tools Included

- **Assessment Tool for Discharging Institutional Clients with Housing Needs** for discharge planners to collect pertinent information and documentation to send to relevant Coordinated Entry System access point to streamline client access to housing and services.
- A **Handout** and **Flow Charts** to help Discharge Planners determine whether a client is literally homeless, and if so, chronically homeless, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), as well as to determine whether sufficient documentation exists to demonstrate literal or chronic homelessness.

Using the Tools

Discharge planners working with clients with post-discharge housing needs should:

- Fill out the **Assessment Tool for Discharging Institutional Clients with Housing Needs**, including compiling and attaching supporting documentation. The included **handout** and **Flow Charts**, will help to answer many of the questions contained in the Assessment Tool.
- Obtain written consent (through a signed Release of Information, for example) from the client to share the information with the appropriate CoC.
- Identify and contact the appropriate Coordinated Entry Access Point in the jurisdiction to which the client will be discharged. If you are unable to locate contact information for the appropriate Access Point, the contact person for the CoC operating in that region should be able to provide that information. Contact information for each CoC is available at: www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/.

- Describe the information and documentation that has been collected, and offer to send it to the Coordinated Entry Access Point to facilitate the client's entry into the CoC's system.

Checklist

- ☐ Fill out the Basic Information in the Assessment Tool.
- ☐ Determine to the best of your ability whether your client is homeless per the HUD definition.
- ☐ If your client is homeless, identify and compile sufficient documentation.
- ☐ Determine to the best of your ability whether your client is chronically homeless per the HUD definition.
- ☐ If your client is chronically homeless, identify and compile sufficient documentation.
- ☐ Obtain client consent to share their information with the CoC in which they will be discharged.
- ☐ Prepare packet, including the completed Assessment Tool and documentation.
- ☐ Identify the Coordinated Entry Access Point for the geographic area to which the client will be discharged.

Assessment Tool for Discharging Institutional Clients with Housing Needs

1. **Date of Assessment:** _____/_____/_____

2. **Client Name**

   First Name: _____ Nickname: _____

   Last Name: _____

3. **Date of Birth:** _____/_____/_____

4. **Social Security Number**: _____-_____-_____

5. **Upon discharge, how long will the client have been in this institution during this stay?**
   - ☐ Under 90 days
   - ☐ 90 days or more

6. Is this client **homeless**, according to HUD regulations? (*see the **Homeless Definition Flowchart – Institutions** to determine*)

   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

   Notes:_____

   _____

   _____

   _____

7. Is the client's **homeless** status documented? (*see the **Homeless Definition Flowchart – Institutions** to determine*)

   - ☐ Yes
     - ☐ Check here if the appropriate documentation is attached. List the documentation Here:

       _____

       _____

       _____

       _____

       _____
   - ☐ No

Disclaimer: This document was generated by TA providers to support direct TA for H2 Initiative communities and other communities working to improve Housing – Healthcare Systems Coordination. It is a working tool being offered in "beta" (i.e., test pilot) form. This is not a HUD-endorsed document. To provide feedback, email Gillian@homebaseccc.org.

8. Is this client **chronically homeless**, according to HUD regulations? (*see the **Chronically Homeless Definition Flowchart – Institutions** to determine*)

☐ Yes
☐ No

Notes:_____

_____

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_____

_____

_____

9. Is the client's **chronically homeless** status documented? (*see the **Chronically Homeless Definition Flowchart – Institutions** to determine*)

☐ Yes

☐ Check here if the appropriate documentation is attached. List the documentation Here:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

☐ No

10. Did you obtain the client's written consent to share this information with the CoC in which they will be discharged?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Notes:_____

_____

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_____

Determining & Documenting Homeless & Chronic Homeless Status

Determining & Documenting Homeless Status

*Please see the "**Homeless Definition – Institutions Flowchart**" is for a more user-friendly way to determine and document homeless status*

An individual exiting an institution can only be considered homeless according to HUD if:

- (s)he has resided for in the institution for fewer than 90 days; AND
- (s)he resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution

Please note: if a person has resided in the institution for 90 days or longer, s(he) is not considered homeless within the HUD definition, nor can (s)he be considered to be chronically homeless. However, the person may still be eligible for various state-, locally-, or privately-funded programs. Please see the Housing Resource Guide and contact the appropriate Coordinated Entry Access Point.

To sufficiently document homeless status, two (2) documents are required:
ONE of the following:

- Written observation by an outreach worker of the conditions where the individual or family was living;
- Written referral by another housing or service provider; **or,**
- Certification by the individual or head of household seeking assistance.

PLUS ONE of the following:

- Discharge paperwork or a written or oral referral from a social worker, case manager, or other appropriate official of the institution stating the beginning and end dates of residency. All oral statements must be recorded by the intake worker; **or,**
- If evidence described above isn't obtainable, a written record of the intake worker's due diligence in attempting to obtain that evidence **PLUS** a certification by the individual seeking assistance that states (s)he is exiting or has just exited an institution where (s)he has resided for fewer than 90 days.

Determining Chronically Homeless Status

*Please see the "**Chronic Homeless Definition – Institutions Flowchart**" is for a more user-friendly way to determine chronically homeless status*

If a client is homeless within HUD's definition, you will next want to determine whether the client meets the definition of chronic homelessness. For discharge planning purposes, to meet the definition of chronic homelessness, **a person who has been residing in an institutional care facility - including a jail, substance abuse or mental health treatment facility, hospital, or other similar facility – must have been there for fewer than 90 days, AND must satisfy all of the following criteria:**

- Homeless Status Prior to Entering Institution: Person was Homeless immediately before entering the institution (i.e., living in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter)
- Duration: Pre-institution homelessness was either:
    - Continuous for at least 1 year, OR
    - On at least four separate occasions[2] in the last 3 years, where the cumulative total of the four occasions is at least one year.
    - Note: Stays in institutions of fewer than 90 days do not constitute as a break in homelessness, but rather are included in the cumulative total.
- Disabling Condition: Person can be diagnosed with one or more of the following conditions: Substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability (as defined in section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15002)), posttraumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairments resulting from brain injury, or chronic physical illness or disability.
    - A person shall be considered to have a disability if (s)he has a condition that:
        - Is expected to be long-continuing or of indefinite duration;
        - Substantially impedes the individual's ability to live independently;
        - Could be improved by the provision of more suitable housing conditions; **and,**
        - Is a physical, mental, or emotional impairment, including an impairment caused by alcohol or drug abuse, posttraumatic stress disorder, or brain injury.
    - A person shall also be considered to have a disability if:
        - (S)he has Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) or Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV); or
        - (S)he has a developmental disability. Developmental disability is defined as a severe, chronic disability of an individual that is:
            - Attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical;

[2] The final rule provides that a break in homelessness spent living in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter is considered to be any period of 7 or more consecutive nights where an individual or family is not living or residing in such a place.

- Is manifested before the individual attains age 22;
- Is likely to continue indefinitely;
- Results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity: self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, or economic self-sufficiency; **and,**
- Reflects the individual's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

Documenting Chronic Homeless Status

*Please see the "**Chronic Homeless Definition – Institutions Flowchart**" is for a more user-friendly way to determine needed documentation of chronically homeless status*

The definition of Chronic Homelessness includes three components: (1) homeless status, (2) duration, and (3) disability. Each component of chronic homelessness - homeless status, duration, and disabling condition - must be documented, as described in the tables below.

1. Homeless Status

See above section on documenting homeless status.

2. Duration

Definition Used	**Documentation Needed**
An individual who has been homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter **continuously for at least one year**.	**ONE** of the following providing evidence that the homeless occasion was continuous, for a year period, without a break (i.e., seven or more continuous nights in place meant for human habitation) in living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter: • Written observation by an outreach worker of the conditions where the individual or family was living; • Written referral by another housing or service provider; or, • Certification by the individual or head of household seeking assistance. **PLUS** at least nine (9) months of the 1-year period must be documented by **ONE** of the following: • HMIS data; • A written referral; **or,** • A written observation by an outreach worker.
OR	

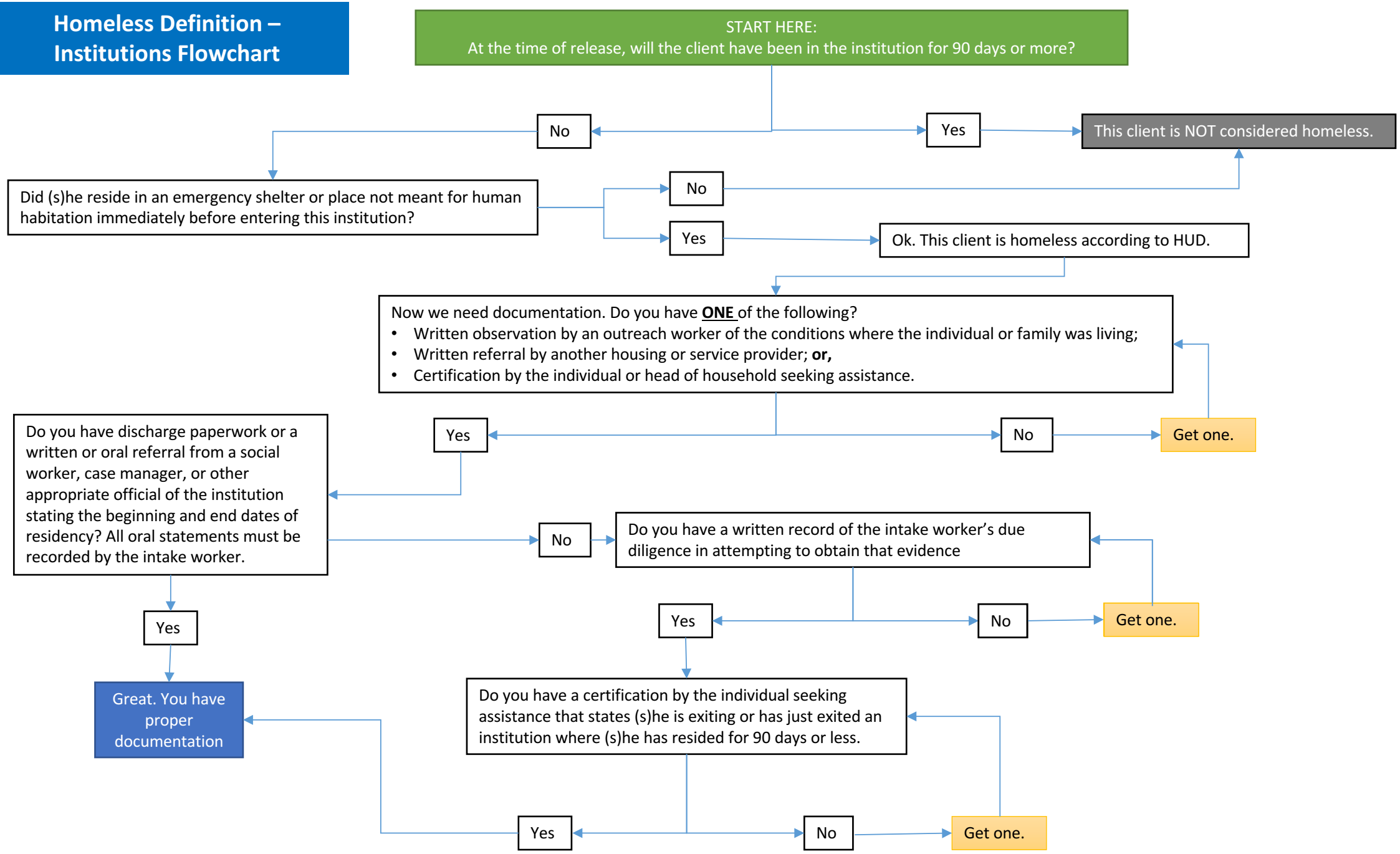
An individual who has been homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter continuously for on **at least four separate occasions in the last 3 years**.	**ONE** of the following providing evidence that the head of household experienced at least four separate occasions of homelessness in the past three years: • Written observation by an outreach worker of the conditions where the individual or family was living; • Written referral by another housing or service provider; or, • Certification by the individual or head of household seeking assistance. **PLUS** at least three occasions must be documented by **ONE** of the following (any other occasion may be documented by a self-certification with no other supporting documentation): • HMIS data; • A written referral; **or,** • A written observation by an outreach worker.

3. Disability

ONE of the following:

- Written verification of the disability from a professional licensed by the state to diagnose and treat the disability and his or her certification that:
    - The person has a disability (according to the previously provided definition);
    - The disability is expected to be long-continuing or of an indefinite duration; and,
    - The disability substantially impedes the individual's ability to live independently; **OR,**
- Written verification from the Social Security Administration;
- The receipt of a disability check (e.g., Social Security Disability Insurance or Veteran Disability Compensation);
- Intake staff-recorded observation of disability that, no later than 45 days of the application for homeless assistance, is confirmed and accompanied by the evidence described above; **or,**
- Other documentation approved by HUD.

Homeless Definition – Institutions Flowchart



Chronically Homeless Definition – Institutions Flowchart

START HERE:
Before entering the institution, was the client homeless according to HUD's definition?

- Yes
- No → Not CH
- I don't know → See "homeless definition flowchart"

Before entering the institution, was the client homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter continuously for at least 1 year?

- Yes
- No

Before entering the institution, was the client homeless on at least four separate occasions in the last 3 years, with each break between the occasions at least 7 nights each?

- No → Not CH
- Yes → Does the cumulative total of the 4 occasions equal at least 1 year?
  - No → Not CH
  - Yes

Now we need documentation of duration. Do you have ONE of the following providing evidence that the homeless occasion was continuous, for a year period, without a break (i.e., seven or more continuous nights in place meant for human habitation) in living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter:

- HMIS record or record from a comparable database;
- Written observation by an outreach worker of the conditions where the individual was living;
- Written referral by another housing or service provider (e.g. law enforcement, educator, healthcare professional within community); or,
- Where evidence above is unavailable, a signed statement by the individual seeking assistance; **and** intake worker's documentation of the individual's living situation, **and** documentation of the steps taken to obtain the evidence listed above.

- Yes
- No → Get one

Does the client have one of the following? Substance use disorder; serious mental illness; developmental disability (as defined in section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15002)),; posttraumatic stress disorder; cognitive impairments resulting from brain injury; or chronic physical illness or disability?

Is it expected to be long-continuing or of indefinite duration? AND Substantially impedes the individual's ability to live independently? AND Could be improved by the provision of more suitable housing conditions? AND Is it a physical, mental, or emotional impairment, including an impairment caused by alcohol or drug abuse, posttraumatic stress disorder, or brain injury? OR Is it HIV/AIDS?

- Yes
- No → Not CH

Now we need documentation of disability. Do you have **ONE** of the following:

- Written verification of the disability from a professional licensed by the state to diagnose and treat the disability **and** his or her certification that: The person has a disability (according to the previously provided definition); **and** The disability is expected to be long-continuing or of an indefinite duration; **and** the disability substantially impedes the individual's ability to live independently;
- Written verification from the Social Security Administration;
- The receipt of a disability check (e.g., Social Security Disability Insurance or Veteran Disability Compensation);
- Intake staff-recorded observation of disability that, no later than 45 days of the application for homeless assistance, is confirmed and accompanied by the evidence described above;
- For an individual with HIV/AIDS, a written verification from a professional licensed by the state to diagnose and treat HIV/AIDS; or,
- Other documentation approved by HUD

Now we need documentation of duration. Do you have ONE of the following providing evidence that the head of household experienced at least four separate occasions of homelessness in the past three years:

- HMIS record or record from a comparable database;
- Written observation by an outreach worker of the conditions where the individual was living;
- Written referral by another housing or service provider (e.g. law enforcement, educator, healthcare professional within community); or,
- Where evidence above is unavailable, a signed statement by the individual seeking assistance; **and** intake worker's documentation of the individual's living situation, **and** documentation of the steps taken to obtain the evidence listed above.

- Yes
- No → Get one

- No → Get one
- Yes → Client is CH and you have proper documentation