

U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Chronic Homelessness Fact Sheet

➤ **Who is chronically homeless?**

A chronically homeless person is an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more OR has had at least four (4) episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years. To be considered chronically homeless, persons must have been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., living on the streets) and/or in an emergency homeless shelter during that time.

➤ **What does unaccompanied homeless individual mean?**

An unaccompanied homeless individual is a single person who is alone. This individual is not part of a homeless family and/or is not accompanied by a child or children.

➤ **What is a disabling condition?**

A disabling condition is defined as "a diagnosable substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions. A disabling condition limits an individual's ability to work or perform one or more activities of daily living."

➤ **What is an episode of homelessness?**

An episode of homelessness is a separate, distinct, and sustained stay on the streets and/or in an emergency homeless shelter. A chronically homeless person must be unaccompanied and disabled during each episode.

➤ **How can you verify and document chronic homelessness?**

You must obtain and retain in your files documentation that individuals you identify as chronically homeless meet the criteria listed above. If a chronically homeless person comes directly from the streets, obtain documentation, such as a certification, from outreach workers or others who have assisted them in the recent past. If a chronically homeless person comes from an emergency shelter, documentation from the shelter should be obtained. For prior stays on the streets or in emergency shelters, participants or you should prepare a brief written statement. This certification should include information (i.e., dates and locations) about previous emergency shelter and/or street stays. In documenting a disabling condition, use the same methods you would use to document for HUD a person's disability. All certifications and other documentation should be signed, dated, and maintained in client files.

➤ **Is an unaccompanied homeless individual in transitional or permanent housing still considered chronically homeless?**

For persons who are identified by grantees as being chronically homeless and then enter a HUD project, including transitional housing or permanent housing, that person is still considered chronically homeless for **APR reporting purposes**. This will enable us to get a clearer understanding of the persons who are chronically homeless and how they are being served.

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