

Manhattan Housing Authority (MHA) Homeless Preference FAQ

1. What is the MHA Homeless Preference?

The MHA Homeless Preference prioritizes homeless individuals and families for the Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher programs. This preference provides expedited access to housing assistance for those experiencing homelessness.

2. Why is the Homeless Preference being expanded?

The preference is being expanded to include referrals from additional agencies—Pawnee Mental Health Services, Be Able, and The Crisis Center—in addition to the Manhattan Emergency Shelter, Inc. (MESI). This expansion aims to improve service coverage and provide more individuals experiencing homelessness with access to housing assistance.

3. What is the HUD definition of "Homeless"?

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), an individual or family is considered "homeless" if they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, or if their primary nighttime residence is:

- A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including shelters for domestic violence victims).
- An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized.
- A public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (such as cars, parks, sidewalks).

4. How do I apply for the Homeless Preference?

To apply for the Homeless Preference, follow these steps:

1. **Submit an Application:** First, submit an application to the Manhattan Housing Authority (MHA) for the Public Housing or Housing Choice Voucher programs.
www.MHAKS.com
2. **Obtain a Referral:** Once your application is selected from the waiting list, you must obtain a referral from one of the participating agencies: Manhattan Emergency Shelter, Inc. (MESI), Pawnee Mental Health Services, Be Able, or The Crisis Center.
3. **Submit Referral Documentation:** After obtaining the referral, provide the referral documentation to MHA to be considered for the Homeless Preference.

5. What is required for an agency referral?

The referring agency must provide documentation confirming that the individual or family meets the HUD definition of homelessness. Additionally, the agency must commit to providing case management services for at least 90 days to ensure housing stability and support the transition to permanent housing.

6. How many applicants can be admitted under the Homeless Preference each year?

MHA limits the number of admissions under the Homeless Preference to ten (10) per calendar year for each housing program (Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher). This limit helps manage the waiting time for other applicants.

7. Are there any changes to the existing MOU with MESI?

No, the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with MESI remains unchanged. MESI will continue to provide referrals and case management services. The expansion includes additional agencies but does not alter MESI's role.

8. What will occur during the quarterly meetings between the referring agencies?

The referring agencies—MESI, Pawnee Mental Health Services, Be Able, and The Crisis Center—will meet quarterly to review the Homeless Preference program. These meetings will focus on sharing best practices, discussing challenges, and enhancing the referral and case management processes.

9. How will the quarterly meetings benefit the program?

Quarterly meetings will improve collaboration among referring agencies, leading to better service delivery and program management. Agencies will exchange strategies and insights to more effectively support homeless individuals and families.

10. What is the expected duration of case management from the referring agency?

Case management from the referring agency is expected to continue for at least 90 days to ensure that housing stability is achieved and to provide ongoing support during the transition to permanent housing.

11. How can I get more information about the Homeless Preference?

For more information about the Homeless Preference, including the application process or details on the participating agencies, please contact the Manhattan Housing Authority at Estabrook@MHAKS.org or visit our website at www.MHAKS.com