

**HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER
ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN**

APPENDIX L

**MAINSTREAM HOUSING FOR NON-ELDERLY
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

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PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Mainstream for Non-Elderly Persons with Disabilities program is authorized by the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act, 42 U.S.C. 8013 (P.L. 101-625) as amended by the Frank Melville Supportive Housing Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-374), the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L. 115-31) and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-141)

The purpose of the Program is to target resources to assist eligible persons with disabilities and their families who are transitioning out of institutional or other segregated settings or at serious risk of institutionalization, homeless, or at risk of homelessness. Targeting resources to assist eligible persons with disabilities and their families who are transitioning out of institutional settings or at serious risk of institutionalization will help further the goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). One critical goal under the ADA is to ensure services, programs, and activities by public entities are provided the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the individuals with disabilities, as affirmed by the Supreme Court in the *Olmstead* decision (and settlements and decrees implementing *Olmstead*). This program will offer vouchers to provide sustained community-based integrated housing opportunities to non-elderly persons with disabilities.

Idaho Housing and Finance Association (IHFA) will work together with multiple health and human service agencies and service provider organizations to coordinate voluntary services and supports to enable individuals to live independently in the community. These partnerships should assist IHFA to use these vouchers by providing referrals, assisting with a timely transition to a unit, and providing the opportunity to access any supportive services and supports.

DEFINITIONS

Non-Elderly Person with Disabilities: A person 18 years of age or older and less than 62 years of age who:

1. Has a disability, as defined in 42 U.S.C. 423;
2. Is determined, pursuant to HUD regulations, to have a physical, mental, or emotional impairment that:
 - a. Is expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration;
 - b. Substantially impedes his or her ability to live independently, and
 - c. Is of such a nature that the ability to live independently could be improved by more suitable housing conditions; or
3. Has a developmental disability as defined in 42 U.S.C. 6001.

Institutional Setting: *Institutional Settings* include, but are not limited to:

1. Congregate settings populated exclusively or primarily with individuals with disabilities;

2. Congregate settings characterized by regimentation in daily activities, lack of privacy or autonomy, policies limiting visitors, or limits on individuals' ability to engage freely in community activities and to manage their own activities of daily living; or
3. Settings that provide for daytime activities primarily with other individuals with disabilities.

At Serious Risk of Institutionalization: Includes an individual with a disability who as a result of a public entity's failure to provide community service or its cut to such services will likely cause a decline in health, safety, or welfare that would lead to the individual's eventual placement in an institution. This includes individuals experiencing lack of access to supportive services for independent living, long waiting lists for or lack of access to housing combined with community based services, individuals currently living under poor housing conditions or homeless with barriers to geographic mobility, and/or currently living alone but requiring supportive services for independent living. A person cannot be considered at serious risk of institutionalization unless the person has a disability. An individual may be designated as at serious risk of institutionalization either by a health and human services agency, by a community-based organization, or by self-identification.

Homeless: For purposes of this funding, homeless means:

1. An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
 - a. An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;
 - b. An individual or family living in a supervised 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, or local government programs for low-income individuals); or
 - c. An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution;
2. An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:
 - a. The primary nighttime residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;
 - b. No subsequent residence has been identified; and
 - c. The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, needed to obtain other permanent housing;
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:
 - a. Are defined as homeless under section 387 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5732a), section 637 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9832), section 41403 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2), section 330(h) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C.254b(h)), section 3 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008

(7 U.S.C. 2012), section 17(b) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786(b)), or section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a);

- b. Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing at any time during the 60 days immediately preceding the date of application for homeless assistance;
 - c. Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the 60-day period immediately preceding the date of applying for homeless assistance; and
 - d. Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities; chronic physical health or mental health conditions; substance addiction; histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse (including neglect); the presence of a child or youth with a disability; or two or more barriers to employment, which include the lack of a high school degree or General Education Development (GED), illiteracy, low English proficiency, a history of incarceration or detention for criminal activity, and a history of unstable employment; or
4. Any individual or family who:
- a. Is fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence;
 - b. Has no other residence; and
 - c. Lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, and faith-based or other social networks, to obtain other permanent housing.

At Risk of Becoming Homeless: An individual or family who:

1. Does not have sufficient resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, immediately available to prevent them from moving to an emergency shelter or another place described in paragraph 1 of the "Homeless" definition in this section; and
2. Meets one of the following conditions:
 - a. Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance;
 - b. Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship;
 - c. Has been notified in writing that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days of the date of application for assistance;
 - d. Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals;
 - e. Lives in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons, or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than 1.5 people per room, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau;

- f. Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution); or
- g. Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness.

Section 8 Search Assistance: Assistance to increase access by program participants to housing units in a variety of neighborhoods (including areas with low poverty concentrations) and to locate and obtain units suited to their needs.

All definitions in the main body of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Administrative Plan apply to the Mainstream NED Program.

ELIGIBILITY

Families with a member or the sole member of a household who is between the ages of 18 and 61 and is a person with disabilities who is transitioning out of an institutional setting (medical, mental, rehabilitative, assistive care) or is at risk of being institutionalized or who is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. To be eligible, the household's income must also meet HUD income limits of 50% of area median income or less and other eligibility factors outlined in the HCV Administrative plan.

RENTAL VOUCHER ASSISTANCE

This program will be administered in accordance with HUD regulations and IHFA Administrative policies covering the regular HCV program.

MAINSTREAM NED ADMISSIONS AND OCCUPANCY REQUIREMENTS

With the exception of waiting list management and turnover, all other aspects of the Mainstream NED program will be handled according to the regulations and IHFA Administrative policies governing the regular HCV program.

If there is ever an insufficient pool of disabled families on the waiting list, IHFA will conduct outreach to encourage eligible persons to apply for this special allocation of rental vouchers. Outreach may include contacting independent living centers, advocacy organizations for persons with disabilities, and medical, mental health, and social service providers for referrals of persons receiving such services who would benefit from HCV assistance.

TURNOVER

When a rental voucher under the Mainstream NED program becomes available for reissue (e.g. the family initially selected for the program drops out of the program, is unsuccessful in the search for a unit, or is terminated from the program), the rental assistance may be used only for another individual or family eligible for assistance under the Mainstream NED program.

PARTICIPANT REFERRAL PROCESS AND WAITING LIST MANAGEMENT

IHFA will create a 50-voucher limited preference for this program and will split those vouchers between its branch offices in Twin Falls, Idaho Falls, Lewiston, and Coeur d'Alene.

IHFA will partner with Homeless Connect to accept referrals from centralized Access Points for those clients who are non-elderly with disabilities and who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. There are Access Points established in each of IHFA's four branch office locations, which allows for a ready partnership in meeting the needs of these mutual clients. According to the NOFA, IHFA must allow qualifying persons with disabilities to apply directly to the PHA and not limit vouchers only to those being referred or approved through partner agencies. The PHA cannot give preference to referred persons over applicants who apply directly through the PHA for the program. Referrals from partner agencies should be sent to the IHFA branch office locations (Idaho Falls, Twin Falls, Coeur d'Alene and Lewiston).

The referring agency is required to provide the following certifications to initiate the process:

1. Mainstream NED Referral Information Form;
2. Certification that the applicant is transitioning out of institutionalization or at risk of institutionalization; or
3. Certification of Homelessness (MNED2) and documentation to support the category checked;
4. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Client Consent & Release form (Homelessness Only);
5. Authorization to Share Information Between Agencies form;

The client will need to complete an IHFA application form. Applicants may fill out IHFA's online application or may complete a paper application and submit it to the branch office.

<https://www.idahohousing.com/rental-assistance/rental-assistance-application/>

NOTE: An application must be completed to be admitted to the waiting list. Applications will be processed in the order they are received.

Once these items are received:

Before the slots are full –

Once a client referral is received:

1. The Branch Office will schedule to meet with the applicant, review the information, and obtain necessary releases. They will then begin the process of verifying the applicant's income to determine their income eligibility as well as other eligibility factors.
2. Once all verifications have been received, the applicant attends a briefing to inform them of the program requirements for continued assistance and the next steps to be taken to begin Housing Assistance Payments on their behalf. They receive their Housing Choice Voucher, authorizing their eligibility for the program and that IHFA has the funds to assist them.
3. Partner organization may be notified in case supportive services are necessary to ensure successful lease up.
4. The applicant locates a unit to rent.
5. IHFA performs a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection.

6. Once the unit passes inspection, Leases and Contracts are executed and assistance payments may begin. This is also the time that applicants may request assistance with their security deposit (while funds are available).
7. Annual recertification of income and Annual inspections are performed.

Once the slots are full –

The applicant's name will be placed on the waiting list. This is a combined waiting list and applicants may apply to and be housed under the regular voucher program or the regular Mainstream program if a slot becomes available for those vouchers first. Once their name comes to the top of the waiting list, the process above will begin. If there are not a sufficient number of homeless applications on the waiting list, IHFA will reach out to the Access Points to obtain additional referrals.

OUTREACH

IHFA may choose to employ a variety of strategies to ensure households and owners are aware of the availability of housing assistance, such as newspaper stories and/or the purchase of advertising space. IHFA will follow the activities outlined in the Equal Opportunity Housing Plan (EOHP) to ensure outreach to and selection of eligible households are performed without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, disability, familial status, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation or marital status. Additionally, IHFA will notify extremely-low income and very-low income households, minorities, persons with disabilities, and others who may be least likely to apply, of the availability of housing assistance. According to the Special Outreach Section of the EOHP, IHFA will contact community organizations that primarily serve such persons. These community organizations typically provide information and eligibility requirements for assistance programs. It is IHFA's position that organizations that represent minorities and individuals with a disability are the most effective means for distributing information about the IHFA program to their clientele.

IHFA has close working relationships with local agencies and individuals involved in rental housing. IHFA staff monitors the rental market by maintaining a comprehensive rent comparability library in each of its four branch offices. These libraries are updated at least annually through contact with local property owners, rental agencies, etc. Additionally, IHFA inspectors are able to monitor the rental market in the course of carrying out unit inspections. When IHFA becomes aware of vacant units that appear applicable to the Mainstream program, staff may contact the owner and present the program to the owner. If the owner is interested in participating, staff will record the names, addresses, and phone numbers or available units for future contact. IHFA is also involved in the development of new construction and rehabilitation projects through IHFA's HOME and Tax Credit Programs. A minimum of 5 percent of these units are accessible to physically disabled persons. Information regarding these units is provided to the IHFA branch offices and other service providers through the Homeless Service Providers Directory that includes a section on affordable housing projects.

IHFA may maintain binders in its branch offices with information about available rental units. Current participating owners are encouraged to notify IHFA of any vacancies. Other owners who may be past participants in the program are also encouraged to notify the branch office of vacancies. Whenever possible, voucher holders are given lists of owners in the area that are familiar with the programs and may have vacancies in their units. Voucher holders are also informed that the list is not all inclusive, and are encouraged to search classified ads in the newspapers, to look for "for rent" signs in their community, and to contact rental management companies that may not be on the list. At the request of households that include a disabled person, IHFA provides current listings of accessible units. IHFA's website, www.housingidaho.com, is a free, bilingual, fully ADA compliant site where property owners and landlords can list their available rentals and indicate amenities, special or accessible features, whether the

units are subsidized or accept vouchers, and many other facts about the property. Each IHFA branch office has a computer kiosk and printer available in the lobby so that clients can access this website to search for rentals.

IHFA may invite property owners to participate in the program through newspaper ads, minority media, landlord briefings, and other suitable means. IHFA strives to develop and maintain positive “working relationships” with private landlords and real estate brokers’ groups, and civic and local organizations with an interest in housing matters. By doing so, IHFA encourages participation in the Section 8 program among owners of a wide range of housing, including housing outside areas with concentrations of low-income or minorities.

IHFA maintains four branch offices. Households entering the program are encouraged, when possible, to call with requests for assistance or to discuss problems with a staff member. Each office posts informational materials (including Fair Housing posters) where they are visible from a wheelchair. IHFA staff members are advised to refer program questions or problems they are unable to answer or solve to the Branch Office Supervisor. Questions or problems beyond the scope of the supervisor are referred to the Rental Assistance Programs Manager or the Rental Assistance Coordinator.

Problems beyond IHFA’s resources, such as transportation and other assistance for households with a member with a disability are referred to appropriate social service agencies, upon request. Telephone contact will be made for the household, with the objective of obtaining an appointment, whenever appropriate.

IHFA is committed to ensuring that all potentially eligible persons who express an interest in a rental assistance program are given an equal opportunity to apply for assistance. In addition, IHFA is committed to receiving and processing applications in such a way that all applicants are treated fairly and consistently. IHFA will make every effort to assure accessibility for all individuals. If IHFA cannot make accommodations for a person with a disabling condition to visit the branch office, IHFA will ensure access to its programs by taking the paperwork, briefing information, or other materials to the individual or mailing/emailing the documents and holding a meeting by phone.

IHFA gives households with a disabled member 120 days initially to secure an appropriate rental unit. This time period is permitted without requiring the participant to request an extension every thirty days. If the first 120 days pass without a lease up occurring, IHFA may approve additional extensions, if warranted.

IHFA’s Home Partnership Foundation has committed funding specifically for the Mainstream NED participants for security deposits and accessibility modifications (e.g., handrails, hearing impaired smoke detectors, ramps, etc.).

1. Security Deposits of not more than one-month’s contract rent (but no higher than \$1,000) may be paid to the owner on this program. At the participant’s request, and based on need, IHFA may pay the security deposit, provided adequate funding is available. IHFA will seek to recoup any unused amounts of the security deposit from owners after a participant moves.
2. Unit Accessibility Modifications – Once a contract has been signed and the participant has moved into the subsidized unit, a request for funds to make modifications may be submitted. If modifications are necessary, and will be at the participant’s expense, once notified, the IHFA housing specialist will provide the participant with an application form to complete and submit. Once submitted, the form will be reviewed and once approved will be submitted for payment. Generally, this funding will be limited to \$1,500 per person.

Funding will generally be limited to a maximum of \$2,500 per client if they request both security deposit and modification assistance.

IHFA will identify public and private funding sources available to help participants cover the costs of modifications needed for their units as reasonable accommodation to their disabilities when unit modifications exceed the limits of the Home Partnership Foundation funds available. Some possibilities include: referring participants to programs operated by the Department of Health and Welfare that provide a limited amount of funds for accessibility modifications; networking with disability groups, churches, Habitat for Humanity, Paint the Town Building Association, contractor groups, and Americorps; seeking funding through foundations, including the Idaho Community Foundation; and approaching trade unions and vocational school programs providing training in carpentry and other necessary services to provide free of low cost labor.