

Documenting Homeless Status & Eligibility

HUD requires that each client file contain documentation of homeless status and other program eligibility. Listed below are the approved documentation requirements.

HOMELESS STATUS:

1. Third Party: Preferred method of documentation. This step must be attempted first.
 - a. Oral or written verification from a third party verifying current homeless status of client.
 - b. The documentation must include reference to type of homelessness to determine which HUD Category the person meets.
 - c. Third party source can be: case manager, outreach worker, landlord evicting person, or family/friend kicking person out.
 - d. Written verification can include: HMIS report, written letter or other already available documentation.
2. Intake observation: Allowable after unsuccessfully attempting Third Party documentation.
 - a. Homeless program staff self-verifies status based on observation, program record or HMIS record.
 - b. Documentation must be written, include information related to type of homelessness, and include how staff first attempted to obtain Third Party verification.
3. Self-certification: Allowable only after unsuccessfully attempting third party or intake observation.
 - a. Letter written and signed by client briefly explaining homelessness and that they have no resources or safe place to stay.

Additional guidance for documenting homeless status for HUD:

1. Intake workers are responsible for obtaining the evidence of homeless status, not client.
2. An intake worker should NOT contact anyone for documentation that the person feels would jeopardize his or her safety.
3. Self-certification from the person that they meet homeless criteria of HUD Category can be accepted in most instances, but Third Party and Intake Observation must first be attempted and documented.
4. When documenting homeless status using Category 4, the intake worker needs to ask only enough questions to understand what is happening.

ELIGIBILITY:

Once homeless status has been verified and documented, the intake worker is then required to document all other eligibility requirements including: CoC preference, program type, agency specific, or funder eligibility criteria. The following are example of additional eligibility criteria: DV, age, disability, length of homelessness, chronic homeless, disability, income or Veteran status. Documentation must be in writing and in most cases come from a third party source.

1. Domestic Violence Status: This is one of two criteria where self-report is acceptable. Take special effort not to re-traumatize client when obtaining either self-report or third party documentation.
 - a. Verbal or written verification from DV provider, law enforcement, outreach staff, medical provider.
 - b. Self-report: Only document basic information that household meets criteria.
2. Age: Youth and Elderly criteria ONLY
 - a. Birth certificate
 - b. YOUTH only: Parental, school, or social services written or verbal certification
3. Disability Status:
 - a. Medical or Mental Health professional certifies disability status. Ideally this would include a written letter from provider, but could include intake worker case notes detailing date, time, care facility, and name of provider who verified disability.
 - b. Social Security award letter or pay stub.
4. Long-term Homeless Status:
 - a. Provide list of each distinct episode of homelessness including: length of time, dates, and location of homelessness.
 - i. Length of time homeless – provide exact or estimated # of days or months homeless.
 - ii. Dates – provide exact or estimated year and month of homeless episode
 - iii. Location – provide exact or estimated place where episode occurred (Site/program, city, state).
 - b. Ideally this should be certified by Third party or HMIS, but self-report is acceptable if documentation includes attempts to verify via HMIS or third party.
5. Chronic Homeless Status:
 - a. Proof of Disability Status AND proof of long-term homeless status.
6. Income Status:
 - a. Written or verbal certification from Social Services.
 - b. Tax statement.
 - c. Pay stub (employment or child support).
 - d. Written or verbal certification from employer.
7. Veteran Status:
 - a. VA provides proof of Veteran status, either honorable or dishonorable.
 - b. Client shows written proof of enlistment, payment or discharge (DD214 Discharge Certificate, pay stub, etc.)