



Permanent Supportive Housing Assistance (PSHA) Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity

PERMANENT HOUSING STANDARDS

Revised 2/1/2025

The Vermont Medicaid Permanent Supportive Housing Program seeks to support Vermonters to become and remain housed, permanently. In order to do this, we strive to support participants into housing that is permanent, affordable, and safe.

We strongly encourage adherence to the standards below but also support participant choice and support decisions that are made as long as all potential positive and negative consequences are explored and thoroughly expressed. Community Transition Assistance funds (CTA) may only be used when a unit is found to be permanent, affordable, and safe.

Permanent – Permanent housing suggests that a person can stay in a unit as long as they want, as long as lease terms are adhered to. While lifetime leases can not be attained, the PSHA program expects participants to formally enter into a written lease agreement, standard or sponsored, for at least one-year with the option to renew and a default to roll over to month-to-month. These conditions can be reviewed on a case-by-case basis if they go against prevailing local practices or for other documented reasons.

Affordable – A housing units for which a Participant enters into a lease must be “affordable” to the greatest extent possible. Under the best practice standard for “affordability,” no more than 30% of a household’s gross income should go towards rent and utilities. Depending on the type of tenant-based subsidy received by the Member or the subsidized unit leased, the Member may pay up to 40% of their household’s gross income towards rent and utilities. The provider agency will be responsible to calculate this cost-to-income ratio and include it in CTA requests.

Safe - Habitability standards (24 § CFR 5.703) apply any time PSHA Community Transition Assistance is used to help a program participant move into housing under the Medicaid Permanent Supportive Housing Program.

Housing must be inspected and found to meet the required standards before any Community Transition Assistance funding requests are approved. Habitability can be demonstrated through the AHS Housing Quality Standards (HQS) when possible, or the providing agency can complete a checklist. Unlike HQS inspections, a certified inspector is not needed to conduct PSHA habitability inspections.

A PSHA Habitability Standards checklist is attached. Use of this form is not required but encouraged, although **units must meet the standards listed on the form**. Each grantee should implement and consistently follow its own written procedure on how to

evaluate and determine housing habitability standards have been met. **Documentation must be kept in case files.**

Using Different Housing Inspection Standards: A grantee may also choose to rely on a different housing inspection standard, such as a city housing code. However, whichever inspection is used, it must determine whether all aspects of the PSHA minimum habitability standards have been met for the particular unit assisted with PSHA Community Transition Funds; simply conducting a city housing code inspection, a sampling of units in a particular development, or another type of housing quality assessment is insufficient. A completed checklist (or equivalent documentation) should be placed in the participant's file.

PSHA funds used to provide services only (without CTA financial assistance):

When a Provider Agency is providing services-only assistance to help a participant maintain or move into new housing, a habitability inspection, 12-month lease, and affordability measures are not required. That said, it is strongly encouraged that all grantees work with clients to ensure that they live in housing that is permanent, affordable, safe, and healthy.

Footnote: The possible acceptance of rental units outside the preferred housing standards is taken into consideration in response to the severe housing shortage in the State and the resulting understanding that length of time in homelessness may be significantly magnified without such flexibilities. This policy may be amended as conditions change.

| <p align="center">HOP - Minimum Habitability Standards for Permanent Housing (24 CFR part 576.403(c))</p> | <p align="center">Meets Standard Yes/No</p> |
|---|--|
| <p>1. <i>Structure and materials:</i> The structures must be structurally sound to protect residents from the elements and not pose any threat to the health and safety of the residents. (this standard also applies to the building’s exterior, common areas, and basement)</p> | |
| <p>2. <i>Space and security:</i> Each resident must be provided adequate space and security for themselves and their belongings. Each resident must be provided an acceptable place to sleep.</p> | |
| <p>3. <i>Interior air quality:</i> Each room or space must have a natural or mechanical means of ventilation. The interior air must be free of pollutants at a level that might threaten or harm the health of residents.</p> | |
| <p>4. <i>Water Supply:</i> The water supply must be free from contamination.</p> | |
| <p>5. <i>Sanitary Facilities:</i> Residents must have access to sufficient sanitary facilities that are in proper operating condition, are private, and are adequate for personal cleanliness and the disposal of human waste.</p> | |
| <p>6. <i>Thermal environment:</i> The housing must have any necessary heating/cooling facilities in proper operating condition.</p> | |
| <p>7. <i>Illumination and electricity:</i> The structure must have adequate natural or artificial illumination to permit normal indoor activities and support health and safety. There must be sufficient electrical sources to permit the safe use of electrical appliances in the structure.</p> | |
| <p>8. <i>Food preparation and refuse disposal:</i> All food preparation areas must contain suitable space and equipment to store, prepare, and serve food in a safe and sanitary manner.</p> | |
| <p>9. <i>Sanitary condition:</i> The housing must be maintained in a sanitary condition.</p> | |
| <p>10. <i>Fire safety:</i> All three conditions below must be met to meet this standard. (i) There must be a second means of exiting the building in the event of fire or other emergency. (ii) Each unit must include at least one battery-operated or hard-wired smoke detector, in proper working condition, on each occupied level of the unit. Smoke detectors must be located, to the extent practicable, in a hallway adjacent to a bedroom. If the unit is occupied by hearing impaired persons, smoke detectors must have an alarm system designed for hearing-impaired persons in each bedroom occupied by a hearing-impaired person. (iii) The public areas of all housing must be equipped with a sufficient number, but not less than one for each area, of battery-operated or hard-wired smoke detectors. Public areas include, but are not limited to, laundry rooms, community rooms, day care centers, hallways, stairwells, and other common areas.</p> | |

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Emergency Solutions Grant Interim Regulations, 24 CFR § 576.403 Shelter and housing standards



PSHA - Minimum Habitability Standards for Permanent Housing

Agency:

Building Address:

INSPECTION DATE: _____

PERFORMED BY:

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I certify that I am NOT a HUD certified inspector and I have evaluated the property located at the address below to the best of my ability and find the following:

- Property meets all of the above standards.
- Property does not meet all of the above standards.

Final determination by program staff based on habitability evaluation:

- Property is approved.
- Property is not approved.

Signature: _____