

VSH – A Place To Start (APTS) Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for APTS, an individual must be experiencing a serious mental illness and long-term or frequent homelessness.

Serious Mental Illness:

1. Consumers with severe and persistent mental illness that seriously impairs functioning in community living. Diagnostic (DSM-listed) classification will vary, but consumers served by ICT will predominantly meet criteria for schizophrenia, other psychotic disorders, or bipolar disorder as these illnesses more often cause long-term psychiatric disability.
2. Consumers with significant functional impairments demonstrated by one or more of the following:
 - Inability to attend to practical daily living tasks required for basic adult functioning in the community;
 - Persistent or recurrent failure to perform daily living tasks except with significant support or assistance by family, friends or relatives;
 - Inability to self-sustain a consistent level of employment or inability to consistently carry out roles and responsibilities as a homemaker; or
 - Inability to maintain a safe living situation.
3. Consumers with one or more of the following indicators of continuous high service needs:
 - High use of acute psychiatric hospitals (more than four times per year) or psychiatric emergency services;
 - Intractable (persistent or very recurrent) severe major symptoms of mental illness;
 - Coexisting substance use disorder or a significant duration (more than six months);
 - High risk or recent (past six months) history of criminal justice involvement (arrest or incarceration)
 - Inability to meet basic survival needs or residing in substandard housing – homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless;
 - Residing in an inpatient bed or in a supervised community residence, but clinically assessed to be able to live in a more independent living situation if intensive services are provided, or requiring a residential or institutional placement if more intensive services are not available; or,
 - Inability to participate in traditional office-based services.

Exclusions - Persons with a primary diagnosis of substance addiction or abuse disorder or mental retardation are not appropriate for ICT.

Long-term/Frequent Homelessness:

1. Without assistance, he or she would have to spend the night in a homeless shelter or a place not meant for human habitation. More specifically, an individual is considered homeless if he or she is:
 - a. Sleeping in an emergency shelter;
 - b. Sleeping in places not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, or abandoned or condemned buildings;
 - c. Spending a short time (30 consecutive days or less) in a hospital or other institution, but ordinarily sleeping in the types of places mentioned above;
 - d. Living in transitional/supportive housing but have come from streets or emergency shelters;
 - e. Being evicted within a week from a private dwelling unit and having no subsequent residence identified and lacking the resources and support networks needed to obtain access to housing; or
 - f. Being discharged from an institution and having no subsequent residence identified and lacking the resources and support networks needed to obtain access to housing.
2. In addition to the above, the homelessness must be either:
 - a. continuous for one year; or
 - b. four or more times in the past three years.