



Office of Behavioral Health

Rental Subsidies Programs

Shelter Plus Care &

Bridging Rental Assistance Program (BRAP)

Training

July 31, 2020

9:30 AM to 11 AM

Topics:

- COVID Policies
- Who qualifies
- How to apply

Presenters:

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Shalom House, Inc.

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Director of Subsidies

Shalom House, Inc.



BRAP

Bridging Rental Assistance Program



What is BRAP?

Bridging Rental Assistance Program

- Transitional Housing Subsidy for adults diagnosed with a severe and persistent mental illness
 - Serves individuals and families.
 - Subsidy program helps to pay for the rent of an independent apartment
 - While on the program, BRAP tenants pay 40% of their gross monthly income to rental costs
- * *Please note: As of May 1, 2020, BRAP transitioned to a 40% program; historically, clients paid 51% of their income towards total rent amount.*

Who Can BRAP Help?



Adults diagnosed with a Severe and Disabling Mental Illness who meet Eligibility For Care Criteria for Community Support Services as defined by the Section 17.02 of the MaineCare Benefits Manual who also:

- Receive SSI/SSDI benefits or have applied but are in the appeals process; **and**
- Have applied for a Section 8 Housing Voucher; **and**
- Meet one of BRAP's three priorities.

BRAP Priority Criteria

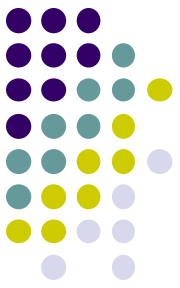


1. Applicant is leaving a State Institution, or a private psychiatric hospital bed; or a state funded residential treatment program (Mental Health Private None-Medical Institution or PNMI) or has been discharged within the last 30 days from any of these institutions.
2. Applicant is being released within the next 30 days or has been released within the past 30 days from a correctional facility; or has been adjudicated through a mental health treatment courts and meets Section 17 criteria.
3. Applicant is literally homeless as defined by HUD.

* *Please note: As of April 2018, evictions from private dwellings or residing in Substandard Housing are no longer eligible priorities for BRAP.*

Priority 1

Psychiatric Hospitalization / PNMI



- **Psychiatric Discharge:** BRAP Applicants being discharged from Riverview Psychiatric Center or Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center, private psychiatric hospitals, or those who have been discharged in the past thirty (30) days and had been admitted to a Psychiatric facility for a period greater than seventy-two (72) hours.
- Also, BRAP Applicants moving from Community Residential Treatment Programs, 10-144 CMR Ch. 101 MaineCare Benefits Manual, Ch. II Section 97, Appendix E, to less restrictive accommodations, to allow for appropriate discharges as determined by clinical teams at the institutions mentioned above.
 - *When applying: attach documentation on hospital or program letterhead that clearly indicates admission date and actual (or anticipated) program discharge date.*

Priority 2

Jail / Prison



- Applicant is being released within the next thirty (30) days from a Correctional Facility, meets Section 17 criteria, and has no subsequent residences identified; or
- Applicant has been released within the past thirty (30) days from a Correctional Facility, meets Section 17 criteria, and has no subsequent residences identified; or
- Applicant has been adjudicated through a Mental Health Treatment Court, meets Section 17 criteria, and has no subsequent residences identified.
 - *Intake and/or release paperwork from above-referenced Correctional Facility must be attached; documentation must be on facility's letterhead stating Correctional Facility name, dates of stay, and the title of the person completing the verification.*

Priority 3

Homelessness



- Applicant is literally homeless as defined by HUD (for example, staying in an emergency shelter, sleeping on the streets, staying at a hotel/motel with emergency funds, residing in transitional housing, etc.):
 - When applying: attach verification of current living situation written on agency letterhead stating location, length of stay, and dates of homelessness; include title of person completing the verification. Last documented incidence must be dated within fourteen (14) days of application submission.
- * Please note: Staying with friends or family (for example, couch surfing) or in the process of being evicted does not qualify for homelessness status.

Disability Documentation



- **IF Applicant is enrolled in Section 17 (Community Support) or Section 97 (PNMI) services:**
 - Attach KEPRO verification which includes active enrollment date.

OR

- **IF Applicant is not enrolled in Section 17 or Section 97 services:**
 - Attach a completed BRAP Enrollment Form with a diagnosis given date and LOCUS score (dated within one year of application).

Income Source



- All applicants must be receiving SSI/SSDI or have another form of income to be eligible for BRAP (*for example, SSI/SSDI, TANF, Child Support, Employment, General Assistance, etc.*)
 - All household income verifications must be dated within 120 days of application submission.
- All applicants must attach current SSI/SSDI verification to their application
 - Documentation of current application for SSI/SSDI or appeal of SSI/SSDI denial.

Section 8



All applicants applying for BRAP must apply for Section 8 to be considered eligible. When applying, please submit:

- Copy of application with date/time stamp; or
- Letter from Housing Authority regarding applicant's current status on their Section 8 waitlist.
- If applicant is not eligible for a Section 8 waitlist, please submit verification of the denial from the Housing Authority.

How to Apply for BRAP



1. Complete an application and gather all the required attachments / verifications
 - Verification of income from or application to Social Security
 - Verification of application for Section 8 housing
 - Verification of priority status
 - Verification of Section 17 eligibility (KEPRO Authorization or BRAP enrollment form)
2. Submit completed application and all attachments to the Local Administering Agent (LAA) who covers the desired town/county where applicant wishes to reside.

What is Shelter Plus Care?



- Permanent Supported Housing Subsidy for adults with a severe disability who are experiencing homelessness.
 - Program serves individuals and families
- Subsidy program helps to pay for the rent of an independent apartment.
 - While on the program, tenants pay 30% of their adjusted monthly income towards rental costs.
 - Applicants & Tenants are able to utilize the program if they have no income.

Shelter Plus Care (SPC)



SPC vouchers are prioritized for those with a diagnosis of a Severe and Persistent Mental Illness, Chronic Substance Use, Co-Occurring Disorders, or HIV/AIDS according to the following homeless priorities:

1. HUD-defined Chronic Homeless
2. Maine-defined Long-Term Stayer
3. HUD-defined Literal Homeless
4. HUD-defined moving from/graduating Transitional Housing with documentation of homelessness upon entrance.

SPC Homeless Criteria



Applicant is literally homeless as defined by HUD (for example, emergency shelter, sleeping on the streets, motel stay with emergency funds, transitional housing, etc.):

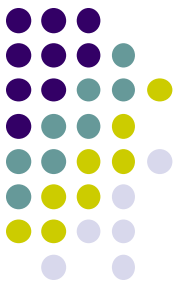
- When applying: attach verification of living situation written on agency letterhead stating location, length of stay and dates of homelessness; include title of person completing the verification. Last documented incidence must be dated within fourteen (14) days of application submission.
- * Please note: Staying with friends or family (for example, couch surfing) or in the process of being evicted does not qualify for homelessness status.

How to Apply for SPC



1. Complete an application and gather all the required attachments (signed disability verification, household income, & verification of homelessness).
2. Submit complete application and all attachments to the Local Administering Agent (LAA) who covers the desired town/county where the applicant wishes to reside.

What Happens When a Voucher is Awarded?



- Once someone is awarded a BRAP or S+C voucher, the LAA who will be administering the voucher will mail out an award letter, a Request for Tenancy and the LAAs rental rates.
- The voucher holder will then be granted an initial 30 day's time to secure a unit. If the voucher holder does not secure a unit in those initial 30 days, they can request up to 3 extensions (totaling 120 days).
- * *Please note: Due to COVID, if someone does not secure a unit during this time frame, they can request an additional 30-day extension.*

Shalom House

COVID 19 Policies



Shelter Plus Care (SPC) Only

- **Disability Verification for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)**
Shalom House waives the requirement for intake staff-recorded observation of disability be confirmed and accompanied by other evidence. For purposes of individuals and families housed with Shelter Plus Care, starting March 31, 2020 until public health officials determine no additional special measures are necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19, written certification by the individual seeking assistance that they have a qualifying disability is considered acceptable documentation.
- **One-Year Lease Requirement**
Shalom House waives the one-year lease requirement for new move-ins & unit transfers as long as an initial lease with a term greater than one month is provided. In these cases, a month-to-month agreement will not suffice as the initial lease term must be greater than one month plus one day.

Shalom House

COVID 19 Policies (cont.)



Bridging Rental Assistance Program & Shelter Plus Care

Housing Quality Standards (HQS)

➤ **HQS - Initial Physical Inspection or Move-in Inspection of Unit**

- Shalom House waived the initial physical inspection requirement to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and assist with housing. Move-in inspections are currently conducted using technology to allow for social distancing between inspector and landlord to ensure the unit meets HQS standards before any assistance is provided. Shalom House will physically re-inspect the unit within three (3) months after health officials determine special measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are no longer necessary. If for some reason a unit is unable to be remotely inspected using technology, a written request can be submitted to Shalom House by the prospective landlord and we will seek to accommodate the request.

Shalom House

COVID 19 Policies (cont.)



Bridging Rental Assistance Program & Shelter Plus Care

➤ **HQS – Annual Re-Inspection of Units**

- Shalom House has waived the annual re-inspection requirement during this public health crisis and will resume inspections within 90 days once health officials determine special measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are no longer necessary; this period began on March 31, 2020 and will end no later than March 31, 2021. If for some reason during this time a tenant or landlord requests a Special Inspection or a routine annual re-inspection be completed, a written request should be submitted to Shalom House by the parties requesting the inspection and we will seek to accommodate the request either remotely via technology, or via physical inspection.
- Any unit which has a current failed inspection with a due date that falls within the 1-year timeline specified above, will be granted an extension until the repairs or corrections can be verified safely either remotely using technology, or via physical re-inspection. If the repairs or corrections can be verified using a combination of photos and purchase receipts, as well as verbally confirmed by the tenant, a unit will be deemed as a Pass.

Shalom House

COVID 19 Policies (cont.)



Bridging Rental Assistance Program & Shelter Plus Care

➤ **HQS – Move-Out Inspections**

- Shalom House Inc. waives currently waiving the move-out inspection requirement and will resume inspections within 90 days once health officials determine special measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are no longer necessary. If a move-out inspection is requested during the time frame during which this Administrative Plan covers, rather than inspect the unit physically, landlords will be expected to provide photographs of damages along with supporting documentation of the repairs needed such as supplies required and labor invoices. Landlords will, however, not be able to collect any more in damages than the maximum allowed by program rules.

Shalom House

COVID 19 Policies (cont.)



Bridging Rental Assistance Program & Shelter Plus Care

➤ **Annual Recertification Paperwork**

- Shalom House has established a two-staged process for any program participant that has an annual recertification due within the next 90 days during this public health crisis. The first stage of the process will require a questionnaire be mailed to the program participant to complete, as well as a request to provide verification of their current household income and other verifications as needed. The program participant will be mailed the questionnaire with a pre-stamped and addressed envelope for ease when returning the requested documents. Once that information has been returned, the housing specialist will update the applicant file with the information provided and mail the program participant all required annual recertification paperwork for signature and to be returned to Shalom House.

Shalom House

COVID 19 Policies (cont.)



Bridging Rental Assistance Program & Shelter Plus Care

➤ **Interim Recertifications**

- As Shalom House staff has been experiencing an increase in requests from tenants who have been laid-off or lost employment due to COVID-19, we are allowing flexibility in the form and types of income verification we are accepting during this time. While this admin plan is in effect, Shalom House will allow the usage of emails, screen shots, and any other form of documentation that permits an income determination to be made.

* *Regarding income verifications: While this Administrative Plan is in effect, Shalom House is waiving our standard practice and allowing the use of scanned documents, client photographs, emails, and any other electronic form of income verification that allows the housing specialist to make an income determination. If a determination cannot be made based on what is provided, a different form of verification may be requested.*

Additional Questions?



- *As a reminder, all applications can be found online at www.shalomhouseinc.org/subsidies.*
- *Contact your local BRAP or Shelter Plus Care agent for applications and more information about these programs in your area.*

Local Administrative Agencies (LAA) Contact Information



Agency	Address	Contact	Contact Numbers	E-mail	Counties Covered
Common Ties Mental Health Services	PO Box 1319 Lewiston, Me 04243	Jeff Ahlberg Bobbie Jean Banton	207-795-6710 x150 207-795-6710 x202	jahlberg@commonties.org bbanton@commonties.org	Androscoggin County Oxford County Franklin County
Community Health and Counseling	PO Box 425 Bangor, Me 04402	Meredith Smith Brianna Brasslett (BRAP) Sarah Derosier (SPC)	207-922-4423 207-922-4406 207-922-4460	msmith@chcs-me.org bbrasslett@chcs-me.org sderosier@chcs-me.org	Aroostook County Penobscot County Piscataquis County Hancock County Washington County
Kennebec Behavioral Health	67 Eustis Parkway Waterville, Me 04901	Brandi Farrington Tracy Allen	207-873-2136 x1241 207-873-2136 x1212	BFarrington@kbhmaine.org Tallen@kbhmaine.org	Kennebec County Somerset County
Shalom House	106 Gilman Street Portland, Me 04102	Jill Grazia	207-874-1080 x111	jgrazia@shalomhouseinc.org	Cumberland County York County Lincoln County Sagadahoc County Knox County Waldo County

Common Ties

COVID 19 Policies



Bridging Rental Assistance Program & Shelter Plus Care Housing Quality Standards (HQS)

- **HQS - Initial Physical Inspection or Move-in Inspection of Unit**
 - Move-In inspections of vacant units are being completed on a case-by-case basis via video with the landlord.
- **HQS - Annual Re-Inspection of Units**
 - A one-month suspension of routine Annual HQS Inspections has been implemented for both BRAP and Shelter Plus Care Programs at this time per Shalom House.
 - Annual inspection, which are due during this time period, will be completed at a later date if the due date falls during this time period. Any inspection not completed by its due date is tracked for follow-up when inspections resume. Payments to landlords for overdue Annual Inspections are not being held at this time.
 - Any unit which has a current failed inspection with a due date that falls within the timeframe this admin plan is in effect, will be granted an extension until the repairs can be verified. Payment to applicable landlords will not be abated during this time.

Common Ties

COVID 19 Policies (cont.)



Bridging Rental Assistance Program & Shelter Plus Care

➤ **HQS - Move Out Inspections**

- Move-out inspections will be performed on a case by case basis via video with the landlord.
- If a move-out cannot be completed, landlords will be expected to provide photographs of damages to a unit supported with documentation (supplies and labor invoices). Landlords will, however, not be able to collect any more than the maximum allowed by program rules.

Common Ties

COVID 19 Policies (cont.)



Bridging Rental Assistance Program & Shelter Plus Care

- **Annual and Interim Recertification Paperwork**
 - Common Ties is currently mailing all annual/interim paperwork packets for BRAP and S+C tenants who have either an Annual Recertification due dates in the next 90 days or have household income that has been reduced during this time period.

CHCS

COVID 19 Policies



Bridging Rental Assistance Program & Shelter Plus Care Housing Quality Standards (HQS)

- **HQS - Initial Physical Inspection or Move-in Inspection of Unit**
 - Move-in inspections are being done as long as the unit is unoccupied
- **HQS – Annual Re-Inspection of Units**
 - OBH has permitted CHCS to waive the annual re-inspection requirement during this public health crisis for 1-year beginning on April 1, 2020. Waiving the annual re-inspection requirement during this public health crisis to help allow recipients to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Landlord payment for overdue annual inspections are not being withheld. We will resume inspections within 90 days once health officials determine special measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are no longer necessary. If an annual HQS falls during the time this Admin Plan is in effect, it will not be rescheduled until the following year. At this time, we have not determined if/when we will resume physical inspections. As soon as CHCS determines that it is safe for our staff to be out in the community, we will resume inspections within 90 days.

CHCS

COVID 19 Policies (cont.)



Bridging Rental Assistance Program & Shelter Plus Care

Housing Quality Standards (HQS)

➤ HQS - Move Out Inspections

- As of July 16, 2020, Community Health and Counseling Services is completing move-out inspections.

CHCS

COVID 19 Policies (cont.)



Bridging Rental Assistance Program & Shelter Plus Care

➤ **Move-In Paperwork (MI)**

- All documents necessary for a move-in will be sent to the client after the move-in HQS has been completed, if the unit is out of town. Clients with units in town will schedule an appointment to complete paperwork at the CHCS. office, unless the client requests it be mailed to them due to the pandemic.

➤ **Annual Recertification (AR)**

- AR paperwork packets for out of town upcoming annuals will be mailed to the clients. In each packet is a letter explaining how to complete the packet along with a date when the packet should be returned to us. Postage paid envelopes are provided. An income self-affidavit form is also provided in the event the client is unable to access Social Security for a current SSI statement. Clients living in town will have scheduled appointments to complete their annual at the CHCS office, unless they call to request it be mailed to them due to the pandemic.

CHCS

COVID 19 Policies (cont.)



Bridging Rental Assistance Program & Shelter Plus Care

- **Interim Recertification (IR)**
 - IR paperwork for out of town clients will be mailed. IRs for clients living in town will have scheduled appointments to complete paperwork at the CHCS office, unless they call to request it be mailed to them due to the pandemic. If it is due to the individual losing their job because of COVID-19, we will be flexible with the documentation required to verify job loss.

KBH

COVID 19 Policies



Shelter Plus Care (SPC) Only

- **Disability Documentation: Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)**
 - Kennebec Behavioral Health will waive the requirement that intake staff-recorded observation of disability be confirmed and accompanied by other evidence. By waiving this requirement, KBH will house people by relying on intake staff-recorded observation of disability while providing recipients' intake staff with additional time to confirm the disability. This will help households with observed disabilities to be housed quickly and obtain the necessary documentation once healthcare workers are no longer inundated by COVID-19 responses. For the purposes of individuals and families housed in the Shelter Plus Care program starting April 15, 2020 until public health officials determine no additional special measures are necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19, a written certification by the individual seeking assistance that they have a qualifying disability is considered acceptable documentation.

KBH

COVID 19 Policies (cont.)

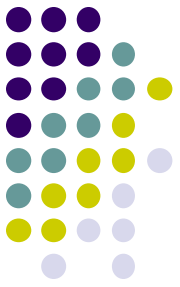


Bridging Rental Assistance Program & Shelter Plus Care Housing Quality Standards (HQS)

- **HQS - Initial Physical Move-In Inspection**
 - In order to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 KBH will continue conducting move-in inspections by physically inspecting the unit when possible to safely do so and with the appropriate social distancing practice. If this is not possible KBH will temporarily allow the use of video technology to allow for social distancing between the inspector and the landlord in order to ensure that the unit meets HQS standards before receiving approval for move in. In this instance KBH will physically re-inspect the unit within 3 months after the health officials determine special measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are no longer necessary. If for some reason, a unit is unable to be physically or remotely inspected using technology, a written request will be submitted to KBH by the prospective landlord and KBH will seek to accommodate the request.

KBH

COVID 19 Policies (cont.)



Bridging Rental Assistance Program & Shelter Plus Care

Housing Quality Standards (HQS)

➤ HQS - Annual Re-inspections

- KBH will waive the annual re-inspection requirement during this public health crisis and will resume inspections within 90 days once health officials determine special measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are no longer necessary; this period will begin April 22, 2020 and will end no later than March 31, 2021. If for some reason during this time a tenant or landlord requests a Special Inspection or a routine annual re-inspection be completed, a written request will be submitted to KBH by the parties requesting the inspection and KBH will seek to accommodate the request either remotely via technology, or via physical inspection.
- Any unit which has a current failed inspection with a due date that falls within the 1-year timeline specified above, will be granted an extension until the repairs/corrections can be verified safely either remotely using technology, or via physical re-inspection. If the repairs/corrections can be verified using a combination of photos and purchase receipts, as well as verbally confirmed by the tenant, a unit will be deemed as a Pass



COVID 19 Policies (cont.)

Bridging Rental Assistance Program & Shelter Plus Care

Housing Quality Standards (HQS)

➤ HQS - Move-Out Inspections

- KBH will waive the move-out inspection requirement during this public health crisis and will resume inspections within 90 days once health officials determine special measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are no longer necessary. If a move-out inspection is requested during the time frame during which this Admin Plan covers, rather than inspect the unit physically, landlords will be expected to provide photographs of damages to a unit along with supporting documentation of the repairs needed (supplies and labor invoices). Landlords will, however, not be able to collect any more than the maximum allowed by program rules.

KBH

COVID 19 Policies (cont.)



Bridging Rental Assistance Program & Shelter Plus Care

➤ Interim Recertifications

- As KBH staff has been experiencing an increase in requests from tenants who have been laid-off or lost employment due to COVID-19, we are allowing flexibility in the form and types of income verification we are accepting during this time. Until public health officials determine no additional special measures are necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19, KBH will allow the use of emails, screen shots, and any other form of documentation that permits an income determination to be made.

* *Note regarding income verifications: while this Administrative Plan is in effect, KBH is deviating from our standard practice and allowing the use of scanned documents, client photographs, emails, and any other electronic form of income verification that allows the housing specialist to make an income determination. If a determination cannot be made based on what is provided, a different form of verification may be requested.*

KBH

COVID 19 Policies (cont.)



Bridging Rental Assistance Program & Shelter Plus Care

➤ **One-Year Lease Requirement**

- KBH will waive the one-year lease requirement until October 1, 2020, so long as the initial lease term of all leases is for more than one month. Waiving the one-year lease requirement for the Shelter Plus Care program will allow recipients to more quickly identify permanent housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, which is helpful in preventing the spread of COVID-19. KBH will be waiving the one-year lease requirement required for new move-ins and unit transfers as long as an initial lease with a term greater than one month is provided. In these cases, a month-to-month agreement would not suffice as the initial lease term must be greater than one month and one day.

Note Regarding Information Presented



* **Please note**

Each LAA's policies and procedures relating to COVID 19 are rapidly changing and what has been presented here may not be the most up to date. For the most up-to-date information regarding an LAAs' policies or any other information provided here, please contact either the LAA you are working with directly or Shalom House.