## Introduction

* How the assessment works: We will ask you to answer questions to help understand your current housing needs and brainstorm with you ways to help you address those needs.
* Purpose of the Assessment: Gather information to explore Maine Coordinated Entry (MCES) housing assistance resources. Completing this assessment does not guarantee assistance, but it does provide MCES with the minimum information needed to connect individuals and families with available housing opportunities within the Maine Continuum of Care.
* Right to Refuse Responses: You may refuse to respond to questions on this assessment.
* Start/Stop: You may stop this assessment at any time and pick it back up at a later meeting.
* No Right/Wrong Responses: Your responses will not harm any other services you receive from our agency. The questions are only designed to help explore housing options you may want to pursue.
* Filing a Discrimination Complaint: If at any time you would like information on filing a complaint because you believe you are being discriminated against, let me know and I can give you information on how to pursue this. Any complaints should involve an informal conversation during which the aggrieved person should have an opportunity to express their concerns and have them addressed. Should the person choose to carry their grievance forward, at this point they shall complete a CES Grievance Form. This form will detail the nature of the grievance and include any and all supporting evidence for the grievance. The completed CES Grievance Form will be transmitted to the CES Project Coordinator. The Project Coordinator shall consider the grievance and render a decision within the case conferencing cycle for the locality where the grievance was filed. If the grievance or appeal involves the Project Coordinator, then the Coordinator shall recuse themselves from the process. In this case, the CES Committee Chair(s) will be asked to consider the grievance or appeal.
* ***Directions to Assessor: Consent:*** *Use your internal agency’s protocols regarding client permissions/consent into your database information or releasing information to Maine Housing.*

## Safety and Immediate Need

**Points to Share with the Participant Regarding Safety Information**

Safety means something different to everyone. In Maine, we value our citizens’ right and responsibility to make their own choices for their own good, welfare, and benefit. That said, we will strive to provide every Mainer access to safe, affordable, and appropriate permanent housing in the community of their choice.

To determine what any one person or household needs and wants when thinking about their own home it is important for Maine’s assessment to be trauma-informed, housing-focused, culturally competent, and with an urgency that we’d hope someone shows to us or our family in a similar time.

 The purpose of this section is to ensure that a person’s emergency needs are addressed prior to proceeding with the questions and conversation that make up the rest of the assessment. This is because we understand that it will be hard to have those conversations if the person is in crisis or does not have their basic needs met. If the person identifies an immediate safety need, stop the assessment and proceed with attempting to connect them with the resource they request. For example:
Fleeing/Attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking? Connect to DV services
Unsheltered? Assist in finding Emergency Shelter or hotel/motel stay
Medical need? Connect with hospital emergency room or crisis center, per agency protocol

**Common questions to ask to help assess immediate safety**:

1. Are you currently fleeing or attempting to flee a domestic violence situation, including domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking?

[ ]  Yes

[ ]  No

1. Would you prefer to stop this housing assessment and be connected to a domestic violence agency?

[ ]  Yes – Stop assessment and assist participant with contacting DV agency

[ ]  No – Continue with assessment

1. Do you feel safe where you are? (Consider referral to violence specific resources).
2. Do you have access to a safe place to sleep for the night?
3. What are the temperature and conditions?
4. Are there any substance use in your household interfere with your ability to stay safe and housed?
5. Do you have easy access to clean water and nourishing food?
6. How many people are you living with? (family? friends?)
7. How long have you been in this location? What is was your previous living situation? – history will help inform/determine length of time homeless
8. Do you have any other needs right now? This might be the time you find out about untreated medical conditions, including mental health, substance use, or experience of violence.

## Contact Information

**Points to Share with the Participant Regarding Contact Information**

To enable us reach you when we have an opening, we are going to ask you about days and times we can reach you so you don’t miss out on a housing opportunity through this assessment. Please be aware that someone different from the intake worker may contact you when there is an opening. The person contacting you may most likely be a staff person of the housing program that you have never met before. Make sure to respond to that person so you can take the opportunity as the openings are often time sensitive (two weeks or less). The housing staff person may ask new questions or follow up on the questions you have already answered.

 In the interest of personal safety please remind participant they should provide safe contact methods only.

Please gather necessary release forms that may be needed for each contact person/agency listed below.

1. Please provide any working phone number(s), or the phone of a voicemail service or friend/family member we could call (Please tell me the name and relationship to the person for each phone number provided):
2. Please provide working email addresses you use, if any:
3. What is your current mailing address?
4. Which of the contact methods listed above is your preferred contact method? Do you prefer text messaging over phone calls? We will try this method first when attempting to reach you.
5. Do you currently stay at a shelter(s) or work with a street outreach program(s)?
* What is the name, and phone number and/or email address (if you have them)?
1. Do you work with any case managers or agencies we could contact to keep in touch with you?
* What is their name, and their phone number and/or email address (if you have them)?
1. Are there agencies, shelters or places you stay during the day where we could find you?
* What is the name, and the phone number and/or email address (if you have them)?
1. Are there agencies, shelters or places you stay nights or weekends where we could connect with you?
* What is the name, and the phone number and/or email address (if you have them)?

## Housing Problem Solving Conversation

**Points to Share with the Participant Regarding Problem Solving**

We will explore alternatives to homelessness with you, and if nothing else is available, we’ll continue to figure out other pathways out of homelessness as part of this assessment.

Below is a problem-solving guide to use to give participants the space to brainstorm ways to quickly resolve their homeless crisis. Use the order and questions that make sense, given the nature of the relationship with the participant.

Please keep these thoughts in mind:

* This is not an interview but a conversation
* Use your professional training to guide you
* Be mindful of the crisis the person or family is currently in
* At any time it is clear the person or family will not have their crisis resolved with diversion or rapid resolution, or these questions are not applicable, move to the next section of the assessment.

**Explore the Situation**

*Gain an understanding of the participant’s living situation*.

1. Tell me any background of where you’ve been staying, and how that’s been going.
2. What has changed in your situation to bring you in today?
3. What was your most recent indoor living situation? How long had you stayed?
4. Is this your first time in shelter or sleeping outside?
5. Where would you stay if shelter was unavailable?

**Brainstorm Possible Solutions**

*Engage in active listening and think about/reflect back strengths they may share. Brainstorm possibilities and use motivational interviewing skills. Explore potential options with the participant.*

1. Is there anyone that may want to know you are seeking shelter tonight, or may want to know you need help?
2. Do you have family, friends or anywhere to stay other than shelter, even temporarily?
3. Tell me about past places you’ve stayed that have been positive.
4. Tell me about some strengths you have to navigate difficult situations.
5. What support would you need to stay somewhere else or make a housing option work?

**Next Steps: Assistance to Resolve the Housing Crisis**

1. If diversion is possible discuss potential options with participant and agree on next steps.
2. If diversion is not possible consider rapid resolution option.
3. If a rapid resolution is possible, reflect back potential option(s) to participant and agree on next steps
4. If a rapid resolution placement is not possible, let the client know they can always return if a potential opportunity arises. Proceed with the next part of the assessment.

## Household History

**Points to Share With The Participant Regarding Household History Information**

The next section will ask you questions about your current situation and housing history. Please know that the responses to these questions in no way jeopardize the services you currently use, or any future housing opportunities you choose to pursue; programs do not use these criteria to screen anyone out. These questions are only asked for the purposes of appropriately matching people to the housing resources available based on their preference.

### Current Living Situation

What is your current living situation?

[ ] Congregate shelter (emergency shelter without own rooms)

[ ]  Unsheltered (outside, place not meant for human habitation)

[ ]  Actively or attempting to flee domestic violence in my own home or doubled up with someone else

[ ]  Hotel or other setting with own room

[ ]  Other, please specify

### Potential Barriers to Housing

We are asking people what factors may be in their backgrounds so we can shape our services to overcome these barriers. Have you experienced any of the following (check all that apply)?

[ ]  A housing authority or housing program terminated your subsidy (i.e. a housing voucher, a public housing unit, etc.)

[ ]  You have been evicted from a legal tenancy where you were the lease holder at least 2 times in the last five years.

[ ]  Prior to entering shelter or sleeping outside during this episode of homelessness, you came directly from jail, prison or a pre-release program.

[ ]  A member of your household is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program.

[ ]  A household member has been convicted of the manufacture or production of methamphetamine in federally assisted housing.

[ ]  You have been convicted (found guilty of) a violent crime.

[ ]  You have been convicted (found guilty of) a drug crime.

[ ]  You have a disabling condition(s) that has prevented you from accessing mainstream resources.

**Points to Share With The Participant Regarding Three Year History Information**

When our programs have limited openings, they use a few factors such as length of homeless history to match people to openings. We’ll check your history in our database, or do a three-year history with you so we can record the time in case it needs to be used.

 Documentation is required at the time of the assessment. Nights already recorded in the HMIS record are considered documented.

### Three Year History

How many total months of homelessness in the last three years does the participant’s HMIS record show?

     # of homeless months in HMIS

 Show the participant their record to confirm this is an accurate history of homelessness they have experienced.

Ask the participant if the months of total homelessness in HMIS reflects their three year homeless history in shelters, unsheltered or in institutions.

[ ]  **Accuracy Confirmed** You may skip conducting a three year history.

[ ]  **Accuracy Unsure** If the participant believes there are more homeless months to reflect that are not in HMIS (examples may be unsheltered or outside stays, in domestic violence or other shelters who do not input into HMIS, etc), proceed to collecting a three year history.

**List the places the participant stayed in the last three years that include 1.) emergency shelter and 2.) sleeping unsheltered.** *You may also list stays in institutions (behavioral health treatment programs, hospitals, jail, prison) if the participant was in a homeless situation (shelter /unsheltered situation) immediately prior to entry and after the stay, and the stay was fewer than 90 days*.

Order stays by starting with the most recent stay. *All stays must be documented by the shelter, overnight outreach agency or institution* at the time of this assessment*.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Shelter, Unsheltered Location or Institution: |       |
| Dates:       | # of Homeless months (calculated from date estimates above):       |
| *\*If participant was sleeping unsheltered (outside, place not meant for habitation) one night in a given month counts for that full month of days- ex. 1 night in November would count for 30 days in November when you add up the total nights.* |
| Name of Shelter, Unsheltered Location or Institution: |       |
| Dates:       | # of Homeless months (calculated from date estimates above):       |
| *\*If participant was sleeping unsheltered (outside, place not meant for habitation) one night in a given month counts for that full month of days- ex. 1 night in November would count for 30 days in November when you add up the total nights.* |
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| Dates:       | # of Homeless months (calculated from date estimates above):       |
| *\*If participant was sleeping unsheltered (outside, place not meant for habitation) one night in a given month counts for that full month of days- ex. 1 night in November would count for 30 days in November when you add up the total nights.* |
| Name of Shelter, Unsheltered Location or Institution: |       |
| Dates:       | # of Homeless months (calculated from date estimates above):       |
| *\*If participant was sleeping unsheltered (outside, place not meant for habitation) one night in a given month counts for that full month of days- ex. 1 night in November would count for 30 days in November when you add up the total nights.* |
| Name of Shelter, Unsheltered Location or Institution: |       |
| Dates:       | # of Homeless months (calculated from date estimates above):       |
| *\*If participant was sleeping unsheltered (outside, place not meant for habitation) one night in a given month counts for that full month of days- ex. 1 night in November would count for 30 days in November when you add up the total nights.* |

Total # of Homeless months:

      (months from 3 yr. history + months in HMIS if applicable)

## Housing Preferences

**Points to Share With The Participant Regarding Household History Information**

Openings for housing programs in our portfolio are not often: While you will be signed up for these housing programs by doing the assessment, most of these units already have people living in them, so openings do not come up often.

Area and Bedroom Size Choice: We’ll ask you what neighborhoods/bedroom sizes you would consider living in if openings came up. The more choices you pick, the better your chance of being offered a unit if there are ever openings. You are not required to take a unit in an area you selected.

### Household Income

What is your total household’s estimated gross annual income? We ask because some of these units have income requirements.

$

### Unit Size/Type Selection

Keep in mind smaller bedroom units may have more frequent openings.

B1. If you are a single adult, would you consider living in a single room occupancy (SRO)?

**[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not applicable**

B2. If you need a bedroom size larger than an SRO, studio or 1 bedroom, select the size below.

**[ ]  2** **[ ]  3** **[ ]  4** **[ ]  5** **[ ]  Not applicable**

### Military Service

We want to know if you have served in the United States military service history because some resources are designed for clients based on their verifiable service history.

Did you serve in active military, naval or air service (regardless of length of service) and have a discharge status of anything other than dishonorable?
***Note: This DOES include Veterans who only had service time in basic training. This does NOT include Veterans who were national guard and reserve).***

**[ ]  Yes, I fit this definition**

**[ ]  No, I do not fit this specific definition of Veteran**

 If yes, they are interested in Veterans specific resources, connect the Veteran to an SSVF access point in your community. If they either do not fit the above definition, OR are not interested in Veteran-specific resources, proceed with the assessment.

### Disability

Are you seeking any of the following due to a disability? If yes, you may have to provide documentation of disability - related need.)

**[ ]  Wheelchair accessible unit**

**[ ]  First floor/elevator (little to no stairs to your unit)**

**[ ]  Other accessibility**

**[ ]  N/A**

Are you interested in applying for housing units targeted for persons with disabilities? (the definition of disability, as well as eligibility or preference criteria, may vary depending on the housing. You may have to provide documentation of a disability to qualify for these housing units.)

**[ ]  Yes** **[ ]  No**

### Youth

Youth Choice (for heads of household who are 24 yrs. or younger): Would you like to be considered for housing programs that are:

[ ]  **Youth-specific only:** (Youth-specific programs are with agencies who have a focus on young populations; they may be able to offer drop-in spaces for youth, as well as community-building and connections with other youth)

[ ]  **Adult programs only:** (Adult programs serve youth who are 18-24, but may not have built in community space or activities to connect with other youth. They can help you find those opportunities.)

[ ]  **Both Adult and youth-specific programs**

### Domestic Violence

Survivor Choice (for those fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking): you indicated you are currently experiencing a form of violence. Would you like to be considered for housing programs that are:

[ ]  **Domestic Violence (DV)-specific only:** (DV-specific programs are with agencies who have a focus on populations experiencing violence; they may be able to offer specialized services for survivors in-house, such as support groups, clinical services, and legal services)

[ ]  **Non-DV programs only:** (Non-DV programs serve people fleeing violence, but may need to link you to outside, specialized agencies for specific services such as DV support groups, clinical services and legal services.)

[ ]  **Both DV and non-DV programs**

### Rapid Rehousing

Rapid Rehousing is a model of housing assistance that is made up of three core components:

1. **Housing search services**: to find a home in the private market. This means there will be a lease between you and the landlord, and you will be responsible for the full rent on the lease. This is not a subsidy, or voucher program where your rent is calculated at about 30% of your income, so you may be paying a high amount of your income towards rent each month.
2. **Case management & Help to Increase Your Income**: These services are designed to build ties in your community, increase your income as much as possible, and assist with budgeting so you can stay in your home and not have to experience homelessness again. Even if you cannot fully pay our rent to begin with a case manager will work you to identify ways you could increase your income.
3. **Financial assistance** to help you move into your new home. These are usually upfront moving costs like security deposit, assistance with rent, and a moving truck.

Would you like to be considered for RRH when they have an opening?

**[ ]  Yes [ ]  No**

### Area Selection

What are the areas you are willing to live in (specific cities or regions)? Another way to decide is to figure out which places you will not live in. You are not penalized if you change your mind about where you would like to live.

## Next Steps

 Please review the information below with the participant.

[ ]  **Wait Times**

Wait times can change from time to time based on how many people are interested, and the openings we have available. We also have a few priority populations we have to serve first if there are limited openings - these are people in temporary hotels that are about to shut down, people who have been homeless the longest and people in an unsafe situation.

[ ]  **What should I do to try to find housing if I am not matched with housing opening?**

We encourage you to keep thinking about other ways you may be able to move out of homelessness, like with roommates or people you know at the same time you are applying for affordable housing.

[ ]  **Who will I hear from if I am matched to a housing opening?**

If you are matched to a housing opening you will hear from a staff member of the Housing Authority. They are going to use all of the contact information you provided us to try to connect with you as quickly as possible. If any of your contact information changes, let me know and I can change it in the assessment. You can check in with me as well.

[ ]  **Am I automatically approved for the housing openings when I’m matched?**

No. Today we gathered information to help figure out if you’re eligible and match you to your preferences, but the Housing Authority will actually verify and document eligibility at the time you are referred. All of the programs have different eligibility criteria- our system will do its best to match you with those that you should be eligible for, but there may be times where you are matched, and are not eligible.

## Scoring of Assessment

 Do not share scoring mechanism or actual score with participants. The score is one factor to figure out who should be matched next to an open resource, it is not a static place on a “waitlist”.

The information for scoring can be found in the **Three Year History**, **Safety and Immediate Need**, and **Potential Barriers to Housing** sections of this document.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Points Value** | **Participant Score** |
| Length of Time Homeless (LOTH) in the last **three years** | * 24 + months = 9 points
* 18-24 months = 8 points
* 12-18 months = 7 points
* 6-12 months = 6 points
* 0-6 months = 5 points
 |  |
| **Priority Bump**:*NOTE: Only one of these two priorities may apply to a single household*Recent Homelessness in the last **12 months****OR**Actively fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, including dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other violence | * 6 + months = 3 points
* Less than 6 months = 0 points
* Yes = 3 points
* No = 0 points
 |  |
| Experiencing unsheltered homelessness at the time of assessment | * Yes = 2 points
* No = 0 points
 |  |
| Barriers to obtaining housing (at least one box checked off) | * At least one box checked = 2 pts
* No boxes checked = 0 points
 |  |
| **Total:** | **16 points total max** |  |

**For Assessors Who Do Not Enter Assessments into HMIS:** Please proceed to [xxx](https://cas.boston.gov) website/spreadsheet/etc to input the results of your assessment so that the participant can be added to the pool of people waiting for a housing match.