



SUPPORTIVE HOUSING CONNECTION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

WHAT IS THE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING CONNECTION (SHC)?

The SHC is a partnership between the New Jersey Department of Human Services (NJDHS) and the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA) to administer NJDHS rental subsidies and connect its clients to quality housing opportunities across the state.

Additionally, the SHC conducts inspections of unlicensed participating housing units to ensure their physical integrity and compliance with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Housing Quality Standards. The SHC also provides resident inquiry resolution services for tenants and landlords, as needed.

The goal of the SHC is to provide access to affordable housing for New Jersey residents with special needs by consolidating NJDHS's rental subsidy resources into one location for convenient and efficient management.

WHAT TYPES OF RENTAL SUBSIDIES DOES SHC ADMINISTER?

TENANT-BASED – These subsidies travel with the tenant from unit to unit within the State of New Jersey. Should the tenant no longer require the subsidy, the subsidy will be returned to NJDHS for redistribution.

PROJECT-BASED—These subsidies cover a specific housing unit and subsidize the rent for any qualified tenant living in the unit. Should the tenant leave the unit, the subsidy remains with the unit.

SPONSOR-BASED—These subsidies remain with a specific support services provider's program as long as the tenant remains in the provider agency's service area and continues to receive services from that particular program. Tenants can refuse program services and remain in the unit based on the lease agreement, but the unit will not be subsidized by NJDHS as these subsidy payments are intended to be used in combination with specific program services of the support services provider.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF NJDHS?

NJDHS' role will be to provide policy direction for the SHC, refer qualified tenants, and provide funding to NJHMFA for the administration of housing subsidies through the SHC.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF NJHMFA?

NJHMFA has been contracted by NJDHS to administer NJDHS rental subsidies. NJHMFA also will provide landlord outreach and training, administer rental and other housing assistance, provide unit referrals and inspections, and perform resident inquiry resolution services to NJDHS tenants.

HOW DOES THE SHC IMPACT TENANTS WITH NJDHS SUBSIDIES?

The SHC will administer rental subsidy payments, calculate a tenant's contribution to rent, and ensure that a tenant's housing is safe and suitable for occupancy. The SHC also will assist tenants in the inspection and selection of housing units.

HOW DOES THE SHC IMPACT LANDLORDS AND PROPERTY OWNERS?

SHC administers dedicated resources for NJDHS rental and other subsidies. The SHC also makes monthly payments to landlords and performs housing inspections, among other housing responsibilities. Participating landlords will be able to market their units to a pool of potential tenants who have housing subsidies and access to supportive services based on their needs. The SHC also will provide timely rent payments for landlords and property owners. Additionally, the SHC will provide participating landlords and property owners appropriate training on processes and policies, as needed.

HOW DOES SHC IMPACT SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS?

The SHC will provide a streamlined, one stop resource for individuals served by support services providers to obtain subsidies. The SHC will offer additional resources for support service providers as well as assist people looking for affordable housing. Specifically, the New Jersey Housing Resource Center (www.njhrc.gov) is an interactive online database with listings of affordable units throughout the state.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SHC?

1. SHC connects individuals served by NJDHS to a broader pool of housing opportunities through the New Jersey Housing Resource Center (NJHRC).
2. By assisting in the separation of housing and services, as well as facilitating lease-based housing in a variety of settings, the SHC will help ensure that housing supported by NJDHS follows national best practices and NJ's compliance with the CMS Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Final Rule.

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3. SHC will assist individuals and families served in this program to establish leases, which will protect their rights as tenants under NJ law. Through its inspections, the SHC will ensure that participants live in safe, high quality housing.
4. For participating landlords, the rental subsidy payment process will be efficient and timely.
5. For new landlords and owners, the benefits of participating in the SHC are:
 - The institution of regular monthly payments, as long as the unit is occupied by program participants, and;
 - The ability to reach a pool of tenants with housing subsidies and supportive services to help them live in stable and independent housing.

WHY IS THIS HAPPENING NOW?

NJDHS' Divisions of Mental Health and Addiction Services and Developmental Disabilities are moving from a contracted system of care reimbursement to a Fee-For-Service (FFS) system. The separation of housing and services supports the state's transition to a FFS model.