

Virginia Association of Housing Counselors

2018 Annual Spring Conference
Fredericksburg Hospitality House
May 1 – May 4

Housing Specialty – Homeless Certification
Counseling Exam Training

Mainstream & Special Needs Resources

Chapter 9



Virginia Association of
Housing Counselors

Objectives

Counselors will:

- * Be familiar with mainstream resources that are useful for serving homeless clients at all stages of engagement
- * Be familiar with mainstream resources that serve clients with special needs
- * Know where to obtain additional information about the resources noted in the chapter

MAINSTREAM RESOURCES

- * Mainstream resources are agencies and programs that generally serve people in or near poverty regardless of whether they are homeless.
- * They include public financial assistance, public benefits, and in-kind assistance.
- * Mainstream resources are critical for low-income families to weather a financial shortfall without jeopardizing their housing.

MAINSTREAM PROGRAMS

- * For a housing counselor or homeless service provider, the challenge is to ensure that people experiencing homelessness utilize these resources as much as possible.
- * The most frequently used mainstream programs that housing counselors consult during housing stabilization are:
 - * Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
 - * Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
 - * Women, Infants, and Children
 - * Social Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance
 - * Medicaid
 - * Housing Choice Voucher
 - * Public Housing Units and Project-Based Section 8
 - * Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
 - * Weatherization Assistance Program

SPECIAL POPULATIONS AND SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCES

- * Many times, people experiencing homelessness also have special needs.
- * Case managers or housing counselors should be aware of the special needs that affect a households' ability to obtain or maintain housing.
- * There are several special needs populations within the homeless population. The four most common are:
 - * People with mental health needs
 - * People with substance abuse treatment needs
 - * People with medical needs
 - * Veterans

People with Mental Health Needs

- * The Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) program was authorized by the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments Act of 1990.
- * The prevalence of mental illness among people experiencing homelessness is higher than the general population.

People with Substance Abuse Treatment Needs

- * The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is a branch of the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) whose mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness throughout the country.
- * One in five people who experienced homelessness on a given night also struggle with chronic substance use disorders according to the Virginia point in time count.

People with Medical Needs

- * Homelessness and other medical health concerns often go hand in hand.
- * Medical conditions such as diabetes and heart disease are found at high rates among the homeless population.
- * Injury and physical ailments from living outdoors are also common.

Veterans

- * *As part of “Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness,” the Department of Veteran’s Affairs (VA) made a public commitment to ending Veteran homelessness by 2015.*
- * Two programs have been specifically developed to address the housing needs of Veterans:
 - * HUD-VASH - Housing Choice Vouchers,
 - * SSVF - Supportive Services for Veteran Families

VIRGINIA SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES

- * *Mental Health Services - Community Services Boards*
- * *Substance Abuse Services - Substance Abuse and Addiction Recovery Alliance*
- * *Medical Services*
 - * *Community Health Centers*
 - * *Community Health Outreach Programs*
- * *Veterans Services - VA Medical Centers*