

The Evergreen Residence Tenant Selection Plan

Tenant selection process

Tenant selection reflects Catholic Charities commitment to housing very low-income people and those who are long-term homeless, at risk of long-term homelessness and have barriers to housing including disabilities, poor rental or credit histories, and criminal histories. Catholic Charities housing programs are low barrier and entry tolerant of rental history and criminal backgrounds.

1. Eligibility requirements

Tenants who are admitted into housing programs must be individually determined as eligible and suitable.

In order to meet the eligibility requirements for Evergreen Residence Housing, an applicant must meet one or more of the following criteria, which may be required by the funder:

Eligibility- meet homeless status requirement:	Number of units
LTH or At Risk Of	88
Eligibility- meet income requirement	Number of units
Individuals have incomes at or below 30% of Area Median Income.	73
Individuals have incomes at or below 50% of Area Median Income.	15
Age requirements	Number of units
18 years of age and older	88

Background check

A background criminal check will be conducted on all applicants by Rental History Reports.

Income requirements

Applicants must make two (2) times their portion of rent in order to qualify.

Verification documents

To apply for housing, applicants must be qualified and verified under the income limits and funding criteria established for the unit. No decisions to accept or reject applicants shall be made until all verifications prompted by the application form have been received.

Housing programs will use Minnesota Housing Finance Agency certification forms for homelessness verification and income and asset verification.

Housing program staff verify each living situation through third party verification. If third party verification is not possible for one of the living situations, the applicant may self-verify.

Client self-certification, combined with staff documentation of failed attempts to obtain third party verification, is the option of last resort to demonstrate HUD chronic homelessness. When documenting chronic homelessness as

either 1) 12 months of continuous homelessness; or, 2) at least four occasions of homelessness totaling 12 months over the last three years, the following applies:

- At least 75 percent of chronically homeless individuals assisted by a housing site in an operating year may use no more than three months of self-report of living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or an emergency shelter to document their homeless status.
- No more than 25 % of tenants served in an operating year may self-report more than three months of such living situations to document their homeless status. In all cases of self-report, intake workers must document the living situation of the individual seeking assistance and the steps taken unsuccessfully to obtain third party documentation prior to using self-verification.

The following documents are generally needed to verify eligibility:

- Application for Housing
- Long Term Homeless certification form
- Homelessness verification letter (if applicable)
- Disability verification (if applicable)
- Tenant Income Certification Form (HTC 14) including third party verification
- Tenant Asset certification forms
- Student certification forms (if applicable)
- Supporting documentation (e.g.,)

2. Interview and screening procedures

Consistent application of tenant screening standards

Catholic Charities requires the consistent application of tenant screening standards to all applicants.

Meeting eligibility requirements is the first step in the tenant selection process. Once an individual meets eligibility requirements, an interview will be conducted. In addition, every applicant must meet the tenant selection criteria. The applicant will be judged on ability to meet tenancy requirements and not on any attribute or behavior that may be imputed to a particular group or category of persons of which an applicant may be a member. All staff will conduct interviews using a pre-screened set of questions. A final decision on eligibility cannot be made until all verifications are complete.

The applicant interview will assess the likelihood that the applicant will be able to meet all of the following the essential requirements of tenancy, as expressed in the lease, and include:

- Ability to pay rent and other charges under the lease in a timely manner;
- Ability to care for and refrain from damaging the unit and common areas; ability to use facilities and equipment in a reasonable way that does not create health or safety hazards;
- Ability to reasonably report significant maintenance needs;
- Respect for the personal and property rights of others;
- Ability to refrain from engaging in criminal activity that threatens the health, and/or safety of other tenants or staff; as well as refraining from engaging in drug-related criminal activity on or near the premises; and,
- Compliance with health and safety codes and necessary and reasonable rules and program requirements of HUD, and/or other government entities, and/or the housing provider.

Important Note: Any evaluation of an applicant must be disability-neutral and will not seek any information beyond the minimum required to clarify specific eligibility and screening issues, and will not be based on any disability-related presumptions about the applicant's ability to meet the essential obligations of the lease.

The property manager or designee is usually the lead interviewer on the applicant interview; all other applicable staff will be properly trained and prepared to participate. Program staff are encouraged to seek the assistance of on-site support services staff to help applicants understand and complete the interview process. At a minimum, the applicant interview should include at least one representative from the support services team or other tenant representative. In general, the interview's focus will be on the ability for the applicant to comply with the terms of

tenancy as stated in the lease or rental agreement as well as the supports (if any) identified as needed by the applicant for such compliance,

Ineligible tenants

Applicants convicted of level 3 sex crimes are ineligible for Catholic Charities' Supportive Housing programs, due to the vulnerable status of the clients served.

Potential tenant disqualifiers

In line with Housing First principles and Catholic Charities' mission to serve those most in need, neither criminal history nor evidence of use of alcohol or illegal substances shall specifically and explicitly be grounds for disqualification.

However, individuals may potentially be disqualified if, based on multiple factors, they are determined to pose a risk to the safety of others in the building. This evaluation will be in consultation with General Counsel, and will consider multiple factors including the nature of the population served in the particular building, prior restrictions from other Catholic Charities' sites and/or programs, the nature and seriousness of the act(s), circumstances related to the act(s) including mitigating factors or social conditions surrounding the commission of the act(s); the age of the individual when committed and timeframe of the act and all other competent evidence of rehabilitation.

Application decisions

Applicants will be notified if **they are approved or denied housing within three business days** after verifications are returned. If approved, the applicant will be sent a tenant acceptance and an intake appointment will be scheduled. If they are denied housing, the applicant will be provided with an applicant rejection letter **written in the applicant's primary language**. Also, see appeals process below.

Tenant applications, Coordinated Entry, referrals and wait list

Applicants for supportive housing usually will come through the coordinated entry process, except those programs that are exempt and keep their own waiting list. After receiving referrals from Coordinated Entry, the property manager will conduct the screening and select applicants according to the tenant selection criteria for the housing units. Some programs also receive specific referrals from other partners for example, the medical respite units receive referrals from hospitals and other health care providers.

Waiting list

NA

Reasonable accommodations

Where applicable, no qualified individual with a disability shall be discriminated against by the denial of or full enjoyment of the services and facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations furnished by Catholic Charities. The housing application, eligibility, verification and interview process will be accessible to all applicants, regardless of physical, mental, or learning disability. Staff will assist and/or arrange for the assistance for applicants with disabilities in completing the application form, obtaining verification documents, and participating in the interview process. Pursuant to law, Catholic Charities will make reasonable efforts to accommodate clients with disabilities. The tenant handbook will include a statement informing applicants of their right to reasonable accommodation.

Limited English Proficiency

Catholic Charities will deliver services in a culturally-appropriate manner to applicants/residents. Culturally-appropriate is defined as services that are delivered to reflect the unique individual needs of the recipients, such as language and race/ethnic background. Catholic Charities will make reasonable efforts to have staff delivering services reflect the diversity of the clients receiving services.

Tenant appeals process

All rejected tenants will be given an opportunity to request an appeal to the rejection. The appeals process mirrors the procedure outlined in Catholic Charities' Client Complaint-Grievance Policy, with defined levels of reviews and time frames for responding. This appeals process is outlined, as follows:

1. The applicant submits a request for an appeal in writing, or verbally to a staff member, who may write the appeal for the applicant. Staff will offer assistance in compiling/preparing information to be used as basis for appeal of decision.
2. The appeal will be reviewed by a senior program manager or division director not involved in the initial admission decision. The manager or director will review additional/mitigating information provided by applicant and additional materials. The manager or director may seek advice of General Counsel. After conducting a thorough review, a written response of the results of the appeal is provided to the applicant within five working days.
3. The applicant receives instructions regarding how to submit the appeal for another level of review if the applicant is dissatisfied with a response from the appeals process by the manager or director. This second level of review is conducted by the Senior Vice President of Client Services and Community Partnerships. After conducting a thorough review, the Senior Vice President of Client Services and Community Partnerships will provide a written response of the results of the review to the applicant within five working days.