

The Referral and Tenant Selection Plan for the Section 811 Project Rental Assistance Program

The Section 811 Program is a joint effort of:

Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD)

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH)

To be eligible for a Section 811 housing unit, you must be:

- Between the ages of 18 and 61 at the time of you sign a lease
- A Maryland Medicaid recipient
- A person with a disability as defined by HUD*
- Eligible for Maryland long term supports and services*
- Extremely low income, for example: SSI

*Your case manager can help you decide if these eligibility criteria apply to you.

Applicants will be placed in one of the groups below and will be prioritized in the following order:

1. Persons with disabilities living in institutions
2. Households at risk of institutionalization due to current housing situation; such as those who are homebound or living in sub-standard housing
3. Individuals receiving supports from DDA or BHA who want to move from a group home, Alternative Living Unit or Residential Rehabilitation Program to their own apartment or Home and Community-Based Options Waiver participants moving from a DHMH Office of Healthcare Quality licensed Assisted Living Facility (ALF) to independent renting
4. Homeless persons

Section 811 Housing Application Process

A case manager will assist you to apply for 811 Housing. A case manager can be: an Independent Living Specialist employed by a Center for Independent Living (CIL), Supports Planner, targeted case manager, Coordinator of Community Supports, service coordinator, resource coordinator, or other contracted professional working with eligible persons to assist with planning for and monitoring the provision of services to individuals with disabilities.

The case manager will use a web-based system called SocialServe which is a Waitlist Registry. This system pre-screens potential applicants and is where full applications are submitted for persons who meet the eligibility criteria. This Waitlist Registry was opened in November 2014 and on March 1, 2017, closed to applicants who did not meet one of the four priorities listed above. It remains open for the 4 priority categories. When the Waitlist changes or closes, case managers will be notified.

Important things to know about applying for a Section 811 Housing Unit:

**For complete Tenant Selection Plan see*

<http://dhcd.maryland.gov/HousingDevelopment/Documents/section811/AmendedTSPSection811DHCDApproved.pdf>

- You can indicate the counties/locations in which you want to live. Be sure to only check the counties where you are truly willing to live. If you turn down three offered units, your name could be removed from the waitlist.
- During the pre-screening, the Waitlist Registry will determine if an applicant is eligible or ineligible for the program in each location they have indicated interest.
- If you are found eligible, a full application will be completed with your case manager. All applications receive a date and time stamp upon submission.
- If you are a registered sex offender or have a conviction for production of methamphetamine on federally assisted property you will not be eligible for the program.
- Case managers are expected to review and update information in the Waitlist Registry on a regular basis. So you should stay in touch with your case manager.
- Your case manager will need to discuss your credit score, rental history and criminal background with you. Problems in these areas may prevent you from living in the unit. If the problems are due to your disability, a reasonable accommodation can be requested, and if approved, may permit you to live in the unit despite the problem.

When 811 Housing Units become available, how are applicants prioritized?

Using information indicated at the time of referral, applicants in the “Waiting Approved” status are prioritized for referral to available units by the MDOD Waitlist Manager based on:

- Matching of the applicant’s indicated preference for location and size of unit with the available unit’s location and size;
- the applicant’s priority category ; and
- the date/time stamp of the application.
- Priority for accessible units among referred applicants will be given to applicants requiring accessibility features.

Referrals to the Housing Properties:

The MDOD Waitlist Manager will be notified when units are available for leasing. For newly built units, there may be up to 6 months advance notice. For units that have been previously occupied, there will be about 2 months advance notice. It is very important that decisions about applying for an offered unit be made quickly! The MDOD Waitlist Manager will refer up to 5 applicants for each available unit.

Referrals for available units will be handled as follows:

- Waitlist Manager contacts the case manager to verify applicant interest in the available unit and confirm the current accuracy of the information in the Waitlist Registry.
- Waitlist Manager reviews tenant selection criteria for the unit with the case manager, provides technical assistance related to acquiring needed documentation for the property application, assisting with determining the need for reasonable accommodations or modifications and assisting with resolving any barriers to housing such as credit, rental history and criminal background.

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- Waitlist Manager notifies applicants and case managers that a completed application is to be submitted, including who the application should be sent to and the date the application is due. This is usually within 2 weeks of the applicant being notified that a unit is available.
- Waitlist Manager reviews all applications received to make sure they are complete, and contacts the applicant and case manager if additional documentation is needed.
- Waitlist Manager sends completed applications to the property manager for the unit within one week of receipt.
- Waitlist Manager proactively manages the application process to ensure that completed applications are forwarded to the property manager as they are received and that delays in completing applications in a timely manner do not impact the referrals of completed applications by other applicants for the available units.

Selection of tenants:

Property managers will screen applicants based on the property's approved Tenant selection plan. This may include completing a criminal background, credit check and rental history check. Because of the rental assistance provided for the unit, it is unlikely that your rental or credit history will prevent you from being selected. You will need to set up utilities in your name. Debts to utility companies may show up on your credit report. It is still important to work to resolve past credit issues to give you the best opportunities for housing. Property managers will provide the results of the screening to applicants and to the MDOD Waitlist Manager, and will advise the applicant of their appeal rights should an application be denied. **Property managers will offer the unit to the approved applicant with the highest priority and first date/time stamp.**

If you are not selected:

Applicants who were not selected to lease the offered unit will be returned to the registry with the same priority status and date/time stamp. These applicants will be the first to be offered newly available units in the county in which they desire to live provided their then current information indicates that they remain eligible. The MDOD Waitlist Manager will ensure that the applicants are informed that they were not selected. Applicants should direct their questions to the MDOD Waitlist Manager at housing-info@maryland.gov or by phone at 410-767-3660.

Refusing a unit:

Applicants may refuse an offered unit. These applicants will return to the registry with the same priority status and date/time stamp. The third time you refuse a unit, your name could be removed from the waitlist. MDOD and DHMH housing program staff will consult with your case manager before taking any action. Applicants may re-apply at any time.

Transferring units:

With limited exceptions, transfers among units are not permitted and vacant units will be filled from the Waitlist Registry. A request for an exception to this policy can be made and requires the consensus of all three agencies, DHCD, DHMH, and MDOD. Exceptions will be limited to situations that address a request for reasonable accommodation or for other emergency or significant housing or health need.

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