

# Identifying Chronically Homeless

## Definition:

HUD defines a Chronically Homeless individual as:

“either (1) an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more, OR (2) an unaccompanied individual with a disabling condition who has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.”

HUD defines a Chronically Homeless family as:

“A chronically homeless family is a household with at least one adult member who has a disabling condition and who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more OR has had a least four (4) episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years.”

### ***What is meant by “homeless” in the definition of chronically homeless?***

In its definition of a chronically homeless person, HUD defines the term “homeless” as “a person sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g. living on the streets, for example) OR living in a homeless emergency shelter.”

### ***What is meant by an “episode” of homelessness?***

An episode of homelessness is “a separate, distinct, and sustained stay on the streets and/or in a homeless emergency shelter.” HUD requires that “a chronically homeless person must be unaccompanied and disabled during each episode.”

### ***What is meant by “disabling condition” in the chronically homeless definition?***

A disabling condition is defined as “a diagnosable substance abuse disorder, a serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions.” In addition, “a disabling condition limits an individual’s ability to work or perform one or more activities of daily living.” (*Questions and Answers: A Supplement to the 2006 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance NOFA and Application*: p.7).

### ***If a homeless person who was chronically homeless and moved into a transitional housing program are they still considered chronically homeless?***

No. To be defined as chronically homeless, a person must be living on the street or in a homeless emergency shelter at the time of eligibility determination. The definition does not include those currently in transitional housing. Persons coming from transitional housing are not considered chronically homeless.

### ***If an individual living in permanent housing was qualified as chronically homeless and enters a different permanent housing program?***

*Can that person hold onto that chronically homeless status?* No. An individual who enters other permanent housing, as with transitional housing, is no longer considered chronically homeless.