



# **Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

*Updated February 21, 2024*

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**



*The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, religion, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, familial status, gender identity, or sexual orientation in the provision of services.*

*An equal opportunity employer.*

*This information will be made available in alternative format upon request.*

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

**Table of Contents**

<b>Chapter 1 – Program Overview .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Chapter 2 – General Administrative Requirements .....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.01 <i>Governing Statute.....</i>	<i>8</i>
2.02 <i>Entities.....</i>	<i>8</i>
2.03 <i>Service Area .....</i>	<i>8</i>
2.04 <i>Cooperative Agreement.....</i>	<i>8</i>
2.05 <i>Data Privacy.....</i>	<i>11</i>
2.06 <i>Foundational Service Practices .....</i>	<i>11</i>
2.07 <i>Program Obligations – Checklist of Responsibility .....</i>	<i>13</i>
2.08 <i>Applicant/Participant Records .....</i>	<i>16</i>
2.09 <i>Monitoring and Evaluation .....</i>	<i>18</i>
2.10 <i>Financial Management/Records.....</i>	<i>20</i>
2.11 <i>Funding Reimbursement.....</i>	<i>20</i>
2.12 <i>Administrative Fee.....</i>	<i>20</i>
2.13 <i>Future Funding.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<b>Chapter 3 – Household Eligibility, Intake and Certification .....</b>	<b>22</b>
3.01 <i>Bridges and Bridges RTC Eligibility Criteria .....</i>	<i>22</i>
3.02 <i>Tribal Nations and Nonprofit Organizations .....</i>	<i>22</i>
3.03 <i>Outreach.....</i>	<i>23</i>
3.04 <i>Application.....</i>	<i>23</i>
3.05 <i>Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List Requirements.....</i>	<i>24</i>
3.06 <i>Final Subsidy Review .....</i>	<i>24</i>
3.07 <i>Appeals Process .....</i>	<i>24</i>
3.08 <i>Calculating Gross Income.....</i>	<i>25</i>
3.09 <i>Verification of Income and Assets.....</i>	<i>26</i>
3.10 <i>Bridges Waiting List.....</i>	<i>27</i>
3.11 <i>Verification of Bridges Waiting List Priorities and Bridges RTC Eligibility.....</i>	<i>28</i>
3.12 <i>Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participant Obligations.....</i>	<i>29</i>
3.13 <i>Unit Size (Occupancy Standards) .....</i>	<i>29</i>

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

3.14	<i>Rent Limits</i> .....	30
3.15	<i>Calculating Participant Rent</i> .....	30
3.16	<i>Briefing Session</i> .....	31
<b>Chapter 4 – Leasing Process</b> .....		<b>33</b>
4.01	<i>Freedom of Choice in Selecting Units</i> .....	33
4.02	<i>Eligible Units</i> .....	33
4.03	<i>Shared Housing</i> .....	34
4.04	<i>Utility Allowances</i> .....	35
4.05	<i>Inspections – Housing Quality Standards</i> .....	35
4.06	<i>Portability</i> .....	36
4.07	<i>Leasing Procedures</i> .....	36
4.08	<i>Lease Amendment/Extension</i> .....	36
4.09	<i>Security Deposits</i> .....	36
4.10	<i>Payment Terms</i> .....	37
4.11	<i>Eligible Payments</i> .....	38
<b>Chapter 5 – Occupancy Guidelines</b> .....		<b>40</b>
5.01	<i>Interim Changes</i> .....	40
5.02	<i>Annual Recertification</i> .....	40
5.03	<i>Lease Termination</i> .....	41
5.04	<i>Termination of Eligibility</i> .....	42
<b>Chapter 6 – Services</b> .....		<b>44</b>
6.01	<i>Services Overview</i> .....	44
6.02	<i>Housing Transition and Tenancy Sustaining Services</i> .....	44
6.03	<i>Outreach Services</i> .....	45
6.04	<i>Expectations of Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies</i> .....	45
<b>Chapter 7 – Fair Housing Policy</b> .....		<b>47</b>
<b>Chapter 8 – Fraud Disclosure and Suspension</b> .....		<b>49</b>
8.01	<i>Fraud</i> .....	49
8.02	<i>Misuse of Funds</i> .....	49
8.03	<i>Conflict of Interest</i> .....	49
8.04	<i>Suspension</i> .....	50
8.05	<i>Disclosure and Reporting</i> .....	50

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

**Appendix A – Terms.....52**  
**Appendix B – Mental Illness.....62**

## **Chapter 1 – Program Overview**

The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Human Services Behavioral Health Division (DHS-BHD), manages the Bridges Rental Assistance Program (Bridges). Minnesota Housing enters into contracts with local Housing Agencies to provide assistance to eligible households. Bridges goals are to:

- Provide housing subsidies for People with Mental Illness who are experiencing housing instability in order to bridge the time until a federal or other permanent housing subsidy program is available
- Maintain and foster the integration of People with Mental Illness into their communities through a partnership of housing subsidy and supportive services

Bridges provides a temporary housing subsidy for Participants in which at least one adult member has a mental illness and whose household gross income is under 50% of the area median. Bridges funds may be used to pay rent directly to a landlord, security deposits, application fees, utility connection fees, financial assurance/risk mitigation program fees, damage claims and vacancy payments. The housing subsidy is provided while the Participant is on a waiting list for federal or other permanent housing subsidy programs, or it is provided to a Participant who will apply when the waiting list opens.

Minnesota Housing enters into a Grant Contract Agreement with local Housing Agencies, some of which also manage a permanent housing subsidy program. The Housing Agencies work with applicants and issue monthly housing subsidies that are paid to the landlord on behalf of Participants. The Housing Agency partners with a Local Mental Health Entity (LMH Entity) and a Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies and partners that provide Housing Stabilization Services in the region in order to provide access to culturally appropriate behavioral health and Housing Stabilization Services. The LMH Entity enters into a Cooperative Agreement with the Housing Agency to define roles and responsibilities under Bridges. Participation in services and housing is voluntary, so the Housing Agency, LMH Entity, and Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies and partners providing Housing Stabilization Services need a clear partnership and strategy for supporting the Participant's ongoing health and housing stability. The standards for the Cooperative Agreement and partnership expectations can be found later in this Program Guide.

Bridges serves as a transition to a permanent subsidy, and many provisions of the program are similar to those in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program. Examples of similar HCV Program polices include verification of income, leasing procedures, shared housing options, federal Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and payment standard limits on rents. However, Bridges has required priorities for serving households who have histories of instability and Homelessness, and the program is therefore designed to be more flexible in admission criteria. The Bridges housing subsidy is determined by a calculation using the gross income of the household. Beginning on January 1, 2023, the housing subsidy will be calculated using the

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

Utility Allowance deduction that is used in the HCV Program. The maximum subsidy is the difference between the Participant Rent and the Contract Rent, up to the Local Payment Standard (LPS) for units secured prior to January 1, 2023. Units secured after that date may go up to the Fair Market Rent (FMR) or the LPS, whichever is greater. Rents may exceed this limit by 10% for 20% of the Housing Agency's portfolio or potentially more if petitioned for the increase with Minnesota Housing Refer to Chapters 3 and 4 for more detail.

Once initial eligibility has been determined, a Bridges Participant remains eligible to receive a housing subsidy if the housing assistance is still needed, the household is waiting for another permanent rental subsidy, and the household complies with program requirements.

The Bridges Regional Treatment Center Program (Bridges RTC) is a program that is administered through the same rules and procedures contained in this Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide, with some exceptions noted throughout. Bridges RTC provides a subsidy for people who meet Bridges eligibility criteria and who are being discharged from the Anoka Metro Regional Treatment Center (AMRTC) or the St. Peter Regional Treatment Center, now known as Forensic Services.

## **Chapter 2 – General Administrative Requirements**

### **2.01 Governing Statute**

Bridges provides rental subsidies in accordance with Minnesota legislation that authorizes and appropriates funds under provision of Minnesota Statute Section 462A.2097.

### **2.02 Entities**

Current Bridges and Bridges RTC Housing Agencies, and new applicants are eligible to apply for funding if they meet the requirements listed below.

**Eligible Bridges Applicants:** Eligible Bridges applicants must be a Housing Agency. In order to be eligible, the application must also include a partnership with a Local Mental Health Entity (LMH Entity) that will collaborate with the Housing Agency to implement the program. The partnership must also identify behavioral health service partners that can and are committed to serve Bridges Participants in the Service Area.

### **Subgrantees**

Housing Agencies may serve a large geographic area, and as a result, they may have partnered with Subgrantees such as other Housing Agencies to better serve Participants in the region. If a Subgrantee arrangement exists, Housing Agencies are expected to enter into formal agreements with Subgrantees and impose, at a minimum, the same expectations that Minnesota Housing requires of Housing Agencies. In addition, Housing Agencies should help ensure that communication received from Minnesota Housing is relayed to Subgrantees.

### **2.03 Service Area**

Each Housing Agency administering Bridges will operate in the geographic area indicated in its Grant Contract Agreement, which is known as the Service Area. Minnesota Housing must receive a written notification of the change and approve any change in the Service Area designation.

### **2.04 Cooperative Agreement**

Bridges operates as a partnership between the Housing Agency that provides housing subsidies and an LMH Entity, Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies, and partners providing Housing Stabilization Services that provide connections to housing supports and mental health services to Participants. Each Housing Agency administering Bridges must enter into a Cooperative Agreement with an LMH Entity and identify partnerships with a Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies to coordinate the implementation of the program. The Housing Agency, LMH Entity, Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies, and partners providing Housing Stabilization Services will perform the duties indicated in the Cooperative Agreement. Any changes in the Cooperative Agreement must be approved by the county or tribal nation. Minnesota Housing must receive a written notification of the change and approve any change and complete an amendment to the contract. The LMH Entity must notify DHS-BHD of these changes.

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

The goal of the Cooperative Agreement is to assist People with Mental Illness in obtaining and retaining stable, affordable housing within their community. Other aspects of the Cooperative Agreement should contain:

- Designation of the parties (LMH Entity, Housing Agency, Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies and partners providing Housing Stabilization Services) entering into the Cooperative Agreement and unique features of the parties
- Terms of the Cooperative Agreement, including the duration
- Purpose, such as:
  - To foster cooperation between parties;
  - To assist People with Mental Illness in accessing appropriate housing, treatment, supportive services, and income supports
  - To assist People with Mental Illness to live in the community
- Guiding Principles
  - People with Mental Illness are full members of the community with all rights, privileges, opportunities, and responsibilities accorded to all people
  - People with Mental Illness are not required to accept services
  - Support services are:
    - Based on need, preferences, and desires
    - Offered to the individual in the least restrictive manner
    - Flexible in location, intensity, and schedule
- Responsibilities

Lists the roles and responsibilities of the Housing Agency and the LMH Entity and Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies and partners providing Housing Stabilization Services to include:

  - Who the referral sources will be and the process of referral; how are the resources identified for Bridges Participants;
  - Who will provide housing placement and housing stability services
  - Who will assist with transition planning and applying for permanent housing
  - Lists the Participants to be served
  - Lists the services available to Participants
  - Lists the site of services, the times available, and the manner in which these services can be obtained
- Participant Rights and Responsibilities

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

- Describes the rights and responsibilities of Participants
- Implementation and Evaluation
  - The process for modification, amendment, or termination of the Cooperative Agreement
  - Resolution of problems
  - Interagency meetings, including frequency; attendees, if known; dates
  - Involvement of Participants
  - Designation of liaisons to oversee, facilitate, monitor, and evaluate the Cooperative Agreement

Housing Agencies are required to participate in LMH Entity meetings at least twice a year and must have a collaborative working relationship with the LMH Entity in order to best serve People with Mental Illness who are experiencing housing instability. In addition, Behavioral Health Service Agency partners and service partners that provide Housing Stabilization Services in the area must be identified. The resources to provide services must also be identified. Housing Agencies are required to communicate regularly with these service partners, whether through the meetings with the LMH Entity or other organized meetings.

A Cooperative Agreement between the Housing Agency and the LMH Entity that demonstrates how all parties will coordinate the implementation of the Bridges program is required for the grant term. Bridges RTC must have the endorsement of the Adult Mental Health Initiative (AMHI) and a Cooperative Agreement with a Behavioral Health Service Agency. The Cooperative Agreement for both Bridges and Bridges RTC must contain:

- Documentation that outlines each organization's roles and responsibilities
- A schedule of meetings
- A demonstrated plan to help ensure access to housing and services and choice for Participants
- A plan for housing and behavioral health crisis response to support Participants
- A plan to reach out to and engage with people currently in Institutions who are eligible for the Bridges program
- A plan to receive referrals from Coordinated Entry (CE) for households experiencing homelessness
- Signatures by authorized signers for each organization participating in the Cooperative Agreement

Each Housing Agency must provide Minnesota Housing with a copy of the Cooperative Agreement as well as any subsequent modifications, amendments, or terminations. Minnesota Housing and DHS-BHD will review the Cooperative Agreement and make suggestions for

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

modification. Executed copies of the Cooperative Agreement will be an exhibit to the Grant Contract Agreement and should be maintained by all parties to the Cooperative Agreement. (A sample [Cooperative Agreement](#) is provided on Minnesota Housing’s website.)

The Housing Agency, LMH Entity, Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies, and partners providing Housing Stabilization Services will gather input from Participants in order to review the program and identify areas of strength and improvement.

### **2.05 Data Privacy**

In working with applicants and Participants, the Housing Agency, LMH Entity, Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies and partners providing Housing Stabilization Services must comply with applicable data privacy laws and regulations. This includes the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, which regulates information that can be obtained, stored, and/or released in connection with public programs. The Minnesota Housing Government Data Practices Act Disclosure Statement is available on Minnesota Housing’s website at [www.mnhousing.gov](http://www.mnhousing.gov). This statement must be completed at initial occupancy and retained in the Participant’s file. Additionally, the Housing Agency and LMH Entity need to use their own Release of Information (ROI) forms to share Participant information and complete income verification inquiries. All ROIs that are signed by the Participant must be kept in both Housing Agency and LMH Entity files.

### **2.06 Foundational Service Practices**

The concept of foundational service practices arises from the Minnesota Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, which identifies four relevant areas of program implementation believed to have the greatest potential to positively impact outcomes for people experiencing Homelessness. Bridges Housing Agencies must establish these standards to more effectively serve individuals and families who experience challenges in accessing and maintaining participation in Bridges. They must also continuously improve practices as they identify where they can increase outcomes.

#### **Documents Required for Enrollment**

- Instead of requiring original documents, accept copies or other confirmation such as a Social Security number rather than the original card. Avoid requiring documents that are costly to obtain.
- Assist or refer the applicant to available resources that can help in gathering needed identification materials.
- Notify secondary contact of documentation requirements.
- Offer Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participant Obligations (Bridges Form 6) if verified efforts are underway to obtain required documentation.

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

**Frequency of Required In-person Appointments**

- An in-person appointment for the initial Briefing Session may be optional. Allow flexibility for the applicant.
- Annual recertification may be completed by fax, mail, or telephone.
- For in-person appointments, refer for assistance with transportation or offer a home visit option, if needed.
- Second and third chances – implement a lenient policy for missed appointments for people with disabling factors.
- Encourage participation of secondary contact.
- Prior to termination from Bridges due to Participant not responding to communication or appointments, attempt to reach all known contacts in an efficient manner.

**Mailing Address and Phone Number Requirements**

- If the applicant is unable to provide an address, encourage them to provide the address of a family member, a friend, a social service provider, or a secondary contact. Update secondary contact information annually.
- Refer applicant to services for a free or low-cost cell phone, voicemail, or P.O. box.

**Communication Methods**

- Provide multiple methods of communication, recognizing the barriers that mental illness can present in communication. Use mail, phone, fax, email. Text from a work phone if able and requested.
- Release of Information (ROI) for service provider, representative payee, or other secondary contact assisting the person is recommended. If an ROI is obtained, include the secondary contact on receipt of mailed and emailed documents.
- Clearly state open office hours.
- Provide opportunities for face-to-face communication. Clearly inform clients of the process and expectations.
- Clearly state in writing what changes or notices are required for continued participation.

In addition to the areas identified by the Minnesota Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, the following two other areas of practice are required within Bridges. Housing Agencies are also expected to align their policies to adhere to the following practices:

**Criminal History**

Bridges intake does not require a credit or rental history background check and is often more flexible than the HCV Program regarding criminal histories. Housing Agencies, the LHM Entity, Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies, and partners providing Housing Stabilization

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

Services should refer Participants to housing navigation resources or assist Participants with finding an eligible rental unit that they can qualify for based on screening criteria. Criminal history is evaluated to:

- Determine whether an applicant is a lifetime registered sex offender or has been convicted of methamphetamine production in public housing. This does not disqualify them from Bridges, but must be considered as it does disqualify them from other federal subsidies, and a plan to transition to other permanent housing options will be necessary
- Develop ways to support the individual in transition to the HCV Program
- Identify if tenancy supports and landlord engagement strategies are needed

**Documenting Housing Status**

- Bridges does not require that an individual or family be experiencing Homelessness to apply; however, all Housing Agencies are required to have a preference for individuals leaving Institutions or who are experiencing Homelessness.
- If a household is claiming preference points, evidence that the household meets that preference must be verified and kept in the Participant file.

**2.07 Program Obligations – Checklist of Responsibility**

The following is a list of activities that are carried out in implementing Bridges. For each activity, either the Housing Agency, LMH Entity, Behavioral Service Agency/Agencies, and partners providing Housing Stabilization Services or a combination, may be responsible. Responsibilities vary for different implementations of Bridges and must be described in the Cooperative Agreement. Only the Housing Agency and LMH Entity will be required to sign the Cooperative Agreement, but at least one Behavioral Service Agency/Agencies, and one partner providing Housing Stabilization Services with appropriate resources to provide services, must identify activities. Organizations should use the following list as a tool for program development and as a resource for the creation of the Cooperative Agreement.

Activity	Housing Agency	LMH Entity	Behavioral Health Service Agency/ Agencies or partners providing Housing Stabilization Services
1. Publish information on the availability and nature of the program	x	x	X
2. Explain the program to the landlords, RTCs, community-based residential treatment facilities, counties, shelters, social service staff, applicants, and Participants	x	x	X

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

Activity	Housing Agency	LMH Entity	Behavioral Health Service Agency/ Agencies or partners providing Housing Stabilization Services
3. Develop a variety of housing options and strengthen relationships with landlords and managers to make units available for Bridges Participants who may have barriers to housing	x		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an ROI form for use between the Housing Agency, , Behavioral Health Service Agency/ Agencies</li> <li>• or partners providing Housing Stabilization Services and the LMH Entity</li> </ul>	x	x	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform of housing options outside areas of economic and racial concentration</li> </ul>	x	x	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach to potential applicants meeting Bridges priorities:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. People residing in an Institution or other Segregated Setting to include people on correctional supervision who will be homeless upon exit</li> <li>b. People who are experiencing Homelessness and are in need of Permanent Supportive Housing</li> <li>c. People who are experiencing Homelessness or who are at Imminent Risk of Homelessness</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	x	x	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verify diagnosis of People with Mental Illness</li> </ul>		x	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Bridges RTC, verify that the applicant meets the additional eligibility criteria</li> </ul>	x	x	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verify income and assets</li> </ul>	x	x	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain an applicant waiting list</li> </ul>	x	x	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate with the Continuum of Care (CoC) regarding referrals from Coordinated Entry (CE)</li> </ul>	x		

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

Activity	Housing Agency	LMH Entity	Behavioral Health Service Agency/ Agencies or partners providing Housing Stabilization Services
• Conduct Briefing Sessions explaining Participant’s rights and responsibilities, including payment responsibilities	x		
• Verify applicant’s HCV Program eligibility and waiting list status	x		
• Calculate subsidy and Participant Rent	x		
• Assist Participant with housing appeals for denial of eligibility		x	
• Assist Participant in locating appropriate housing	x	x	X
• Negotiate lease and conditions with landlord	x	x	X
• Determine eligibility of selected units based on rent, unit size, and lease provisions	x		
• Conduct HQS inspection of selected units	x		
• Enter into, administer, and enforce Bridges Contracts with landlords	x		
• Make payments to landlords	x		
• Conduct annual and interim recertification of Participant eligibility	x		
• Terminate Bridges subsidy for Participants who violate program regulations, become ineligible for the HCV Program, or refuse an HCV subsidy when offered	x		
• Maintain financial management records	x		
• Maintain Participant demographic information	x	x	
• Report required information to Minnesota Housing to include requests for data and the annual report	x		
• Provide after-hours emergency response to landlords, Participants, and the Housing Agency		x	X

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

Activity	Housing Agency	LMH Entity	Behavioral Health Service Agency/ Agencies or partners providing Housing Stabilization Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist Participants who choose to be served with the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Case Management services</li> <li>b. Diagnosis and treatment of mental illness</li> <li>c. Rehabilitation, vocational training, and employment assistance</li> <li>d. Income support and benefits</li> <li>e. General health care and dental services</li> <li>f. Alcohol and/or other drug abuse treatment</li> <li>g. Consumer and family involvement</li> <li>h. Legal protection (including protection provided under civil rights laws, such as the Fair Housing Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		x	x
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notify Housing Agency of absences by Participants during medical behavioral health treatment or psychiatric crisis</li> </ul>		x	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recalculate subsidy payment and utilities for Participants during medical or psychiatric crisis</li> </ul>	x		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner to increase the supply and options of housing available to People with Mental Illness (e.g., location, style, rent levels, flexible services, integration)</li> </ul>	x	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in biannual Housing Agency meetings</li> </ul>	x		

**2.08 Applicant/Participant Records**

Each Housing Agency will establish files for applicants and Participants. Minnesota Housing requires that these files contain copies of all Participant and property related forms listed below. The following forms are available on Minnesota Housing’s website at

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

[www.mnhousing.gov](http://www.mnhousing.gov). Some of the following required documents do not have a specific form, as noted below, and Housing Agencies are expected to provide documentation in a format that contains the required elements. Required Bridges forms are updated regularly, and Housing Agencies are responsible for using the most current version of the required forms.

Required file documentation:

Form	Required – Specific Format	Required – Various Formats Accepted	Required Annually
1. Application for Bridges (Bridges Form 2)	x		
2. Preliminary screening forms developed locally for intake		x	
3. Minnesota Government Data Practices Act Disclosure Statement and Acknowledgement (signed by all adults 18 or older on lease)	x		
4. Verification of Mental Illness (Bridges Form 4) – Specific records and documents detailing the nature of applicant’s illness should be retained by the LMH Entity	x		
5. Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participant Obligations (Bridges Form 6)	x		
6. Participant Agreement for Requirements of Continued Eligibility (Bridges Form 7)	x		X
7. Income and Asset Verification		x	X
8. Computing Gross Income, Participant Rent and Subsidy (Bridges Form 8)		x	X
9. Lead-based Paint Certification (if applicable)	x		
10. Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections	x		X
11. Executed lease agreement (no specific form; must be a one- to 12-month term)		x	
12. Addendum to Lease (Bridges Form 12)	x		
13. Lease Amendment/Extension (Bridges Form 13) (if applicable)	x		
14. Bridges Contract (Bridges Form 14)	x		
15. Certification and Authorization for Payment of Rent and Deposits During Crisis (Bridges Form 24)	x		
16. Evidence of homeless status or release from Institution required for Participants claiming		x	

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

Form	Required – Specific Format	Required – Various Formats Accepted	Required Annually
waiting list priority points and all Bridges RTC Participants			
17. Eligibility/ineligibility notices sent to applicants/Participants by Housing Agency or LMH Entity		x	
18. Letters and notifications of outcome from informal hearings		x	
19. Documents and correspondence concerning the Participant’s application and participation in Bridges		x	
20. Initialed and dated notations regarding conversations about the Participant		x	
21. Notice of termination		x	

The main file for each applicant and Participant is kept by the Housing Agency. The Housing Agency may share any documentation that may be needed by the LMH Entity in carrying out its responsibilities to provide supportive services, provided an ROI has been completed. Both the Housing Agency and the LMH Entity need to retain a copy of the ROI in its permanent records. The sharing of information and documents should be outlined in the Cooperative Agreement.

**2.09 Monitoring and Evaluation**

Minnesota Housing will conduct ongoing evaluations of the financial reports and Participant files submitted by the Housing Agency. If the grant award is over \$250,000, annual monitoring will be required. If the grant award is less than that amount, monitoring will be required once during the biennium.

Minnesota Housing will review Participant files kept on site at the Housing Agency during site visits or through an audit of requested files. Review of the Housing Agency and LMH Entity partnership will also be conducted on a regular basis by both DHS-BHD and Minnesota Housing. The review may contain the following components:

- Participant files:
  - Verification of income and eligibility
  - Calculation of Participant Rent
  - Fair Market Rent (FMR) limits/Local Payment Standard (LPS)
  - Review of units that have rents that exceed FMR and LPS
  - Lease agreements and contracts

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

- Housing Quality Standards (HQS)
- Additional information as required
- Financial records detailing:
  - Expenditures for subsidy payments to landlords
  - Security deposits
  - Payments during medical and psychiatric crises
  - Balance sheet and check register
- Cooperative Agreement:
  - Partnership and communication
  - Management of capacity and funds
  - LMH Entity adherence to the Program Guide
  - Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies and partners providing Housing Stabilization Services adherence to the Program Guide
  - Housing Agency adherence to the Program Guide
- Interview of case managers, community support staff, and Participants

**State Monitoring of Housing Agencies:** Housing Agencies and Subgrantees are responsible for maintaining financial records that document the use of all Bridges funds and that include all eligible payments. Housing Agencies will be required to provide Minnesota Housing with a monitoring summary on the annual narrative report, which will include information on Subgrantees. After completion of the grant term, Housing Agencies and Subgrantees are expected to maintain all records for a minimum of six years after the grant term has ended. In addition to program financial records, client records must also be maintained for a minimum of six years after the grant term has ended. In addition, Minnesota Housing reserves the right to review financial and client records during this period, and records must be made available upon request.

**Housing Agency Monitoring of Subgrantees:** Housing Agencies are expected to monitor Subgrantee activities. Subgrantees should not receive advanced payment; rather, they should be required to submit an invoice with supporting documentation for services and assistance prior to receiving reimbursement from the Housing Agency. Housing Agencies must determine that the Participants meet all the eligibility requirements prior to the Subgrantee providing assistance. Subgrantees must also provide rental assistance calculations, verification of income and HQS inspection results to Housing Agencies before Housing Agencies can request from Minnesota Housing a rental payment for the Participant. Any payments made in error to an unqualified Participant, or incorrectly calculated, will be the responsibility of the grantee. Minnesota Housing is not responsible for reimbursement of erroneous or incorrectly calculated payments made to Subgrantees.

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

In addition, if Subgrantees are responsible for maintaining client files, Housing Agencies must, at a minimum, monitor them annually to help ensure proper procedures are followed and documentation is collected (refer to client file requirements for details).

Housing Agencies must consult with Minnesota Housing staff in a timely manner any concerns that arise regarding the performance of a Subgrantee, through monitoring or any other means, in areas such as client files or financial management. Minnesota Housing may recommend Housing Agencies take further action such as providing additional monitoring or developing a performance improvement plan with Subgrantees.

### **2.10 Financial Management/Records**

The Housing Agency must establish one or more separate bank accounts (checking or savings) for Bridges payments from Minnesota Housing. The Housing Agency may combine these funds with other funds in a consolidated account, provided that the Housing Agency's banking system can adequately segregate the various restricted funds within one account. Any interest earned on these funds may be retained locally and may be used in paying administrative expenses. Minnesota Housing will request financial information once during the biennium due to financial reconciliation requirements. The Housing Agency must maintain and make available records of payments to landlords.

### **2.11 Funding Reimbursement**

Housing Agencies will prepare and submit to Minnesota Housing monthly payment requests that detail actual expenditures and Participant information for the previous month. The required [Rental Assistance Draw Request Form](#) is available on Minnesota Housing's website. The information collected on the Rental Assistance Draw Request Form includes:

- Actual expenses incurred in the payment of rent and eligible housing related expenses for the previous month
- A monthly Participant log for the previous month, which consists of information such as Participant name, unit address, move-in date, move-out date, Contract Rent, Participant Rent, subsidy amount, and security deposit amount, if paid from Bridges funds.

Minnesota Housing will use the monthly Minnesota Housing Rental Assistance Draw Request Form data to determine the reimbursement amount to be sent to the Housing Agency. The Housing Agency should submit the request for funds to Minnesota Housing no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, unless other arrangements have been approved by Minnesota Housing. At the end of the term of the Grant Contract Agreement, the Housing Agency must refund any excess subsidy funds or administrative fees.

### **2.12 Administrative Fee**

At the time of selection for funding, Minnesota Housing will approve a monthly administrative fee for the Housing Agency, and it will be described in the Grant Contract Agreement. The

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

administrative fee will be paid each month in which a Participant resides in an eligible Assisted Unit.

Minnesota Housing will approve administrative fees that range from \$54 per household per month to \$73 per household per month, based on the target number of households, the amount of the grant, the geography of the Service Area, the population served, and other relevant criteria.

### **2.13 Future Funding**

Funding for Bridges will be allocated through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Minnesota Housing and DHS-BHD may follow one, both, or a combination of each of the following funding processes for a biennium. All current Housing Agencies and interested parties are encouraged to apply for Bridges funds. Housing Agencies with a current Grant Contract Agreement may be considered for funding based on the results of performance reviews, need, and utilization. New applications may be solicited, to reach underserved areas and to identify Housing Agencies that provide culturally competent services and have referral sources that reach Black, Indigenous and people of color that are exiting Institutions, other Segregated Settings, or that are on Supervised Release.

The scoring methodology is designed to incentivize Housing Agencies to be high performing agencies that strive to:

- Improve program design and procedures to efficiently serve the region identified in the Grant Contract Agreement
- Develop staffing models and practices that create access for People with Mental Illness and diverse populations with high barriers to housing
- Create collaborative behavioral health service system partnerships that promote the best possible service outcomes for program Participants
- Track outcomes to show improved program practices

## Chapter 3 – Household Eligibility, Intake and Certification

### 3.01 Bridges and Bridges RTC Eligibility Criteria

**Eligible Bridges and Bridges RTC Applicants:** Eligible Bridges applicants must be a Housing Agency with demonstrated experience working with people exiting Institutions, Segregated Settings, and Supervised Release. In order to be eligible, the application must also include a partnership with a Local Mental Health Entity (LMH Entity) that will collaborate with the Bridges Housing Agency to implement the program. The partnership must also include behavioral health service partners that have or can acquire resources or can and are committed to serve Bridges Participants in the Service Area.

**NOTE:** The application requires the expertise of both the Bridges Housing Agency and the LMH Entity in order to successfully respond.

**Eligible Bridges and Bridges RTC Participants: Housing Agencies can only accept applicants that meet the definition of Participants or Bridges RTC Participants, respectively.**

**Bridges:** To be eligible for Bridges, an adult in the household must be diagnosed with having a mental illness per Minn. Stat. 245.462, subd. 20 (a) (see Appendix B for definition). A Mental Health Professional must verify the mental illness.

**Bridges RTC:** To be eligible for Bridges RTC, an adult in the household must be diagnosed with having a mental illness per Minn. Stat. 245.462, subd. 20 (a) (see Appendix B for definition). A Mental Health Professional must verify the mental illness. Identified Participants may transition to Intensive Residential Treatment Services (IRTS) or other treatment facilities prior to community housing and retain their eligibility for Bridges RTC. The time frame that Participants are diverted to IRTS or other treatment facilities does not affect the Participant’s eligibility. If the individual has a mental health civil commitment court document that has been verified and noted in the Participant’s file, they remain eligible for Bridges. In some cases Bridges RTC may be used by participants who are diverted from admission to AMRTC, St. Peter Regional Treatment Center/Forensic Services hospitalization, with prior written approval from Minnesota Housing and DHS-BHD. Verification and documentation of a mental health civil commitment will support eligibility for Bridges RTC.

### 3.02 Tribal Nations and Nonprofit Organizations

Programs operated by a tribal nation may have alternate eligibility criteria and rules around the HCV waiting list requirements that align with the permanent housing programs managed by the tribal nation. Because tribal nations and nonprofit organizations do not manage an HCV Program, Bridges policies that are specific to HCV Program alignment may not apply. Any alternate eligibility criteria or rules must be approved in writing by Minnesota Housing.

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

**3.03 Outreach**

Information about Bridges should be widely distributed by the LMH Entity, Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies, and the Housing Agency to People with Mental Illness who are experiencing housing instability or living in a Segregated Setting. Specifically, information will be provided to Regional Treatment Centers, corrections staff, community-based residential treatment facilities, homeless shelters, transitional housing programs, board and lodges, county case managers, county employment workers, community mental health centers, drop-in centers, and Community Support Services Programs. The programs should also strive to serve households disproportionately impacted by Homelessness or housing instability and develop outreach efforts to improve their ability to serve these households in their region. If the Housing Agency is not a tribal nation, and there is tribal land in the service region, specifics should be included to reach individuals on the reservation. If there is not tribal land in the Service Area, strategies to reach Indigenous people living in the area should be identified. People who reside outside the county, but for whom the county assumes financial responsibility, should also be informed of the opportunity to apply for Bridges. The LMH Entity and the Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies are primarily responsible for outreach. Outreach should be well described in the Cooperative Agreement.

**3.04 Application**

Bridges applicants are required to complete the Application for Bridges Program (Form 2) and a Minnesota Government Data Practices Act Disclosure Statement. The LMH Entity or Behavioral Health Service Agency Agencies must verify that the head of household or another adult household member has mental illness as defined by the Minnesota Comprehensive Adult Mental Health Act. The LMH Entity must review that a qualified Mental Health Professional has signed the Verification of Mental Illness (Form 4) and has submitted it to the Housing Agency in a timely fashion. A mental health diagnosis is based on a diagnostic assessment not more than two years old. The Mental Health Professional must include documentation of this determination in the Participant’s case file. At time of application, information regarding all the applicant’s previous living situations prior to program intake and extent of Homelessness must be collected and submitted upon participation in Bridges.

As part of application activity, the LMH Entity must:

- Inform applicants that receiving the Bridges subsidy may reduce other forms of aid that they may be receiving such as food stamps and Minnesota Supplemental Aid (MSA)
- Inform applicants of what types of mental health services, community support services, and program services they are eligible for and make referrals for these services if the applicant agrees to a referral
- Advise applicants that participation in services is not required in order to participate in Bridges

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

- Inform applicants that, as a condition of receiving a Bridges subsidy, they must also be eligible to receive a federal or other permanent housing subsidy and accept the other subsidy when it is offered
- Develop and provide to each applicant a written document that incorporates the information in this section, as well as provide the information to the applicant verbally

**3.05 Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List Requirements**

Bridges Participants are required to apply for and accept, when offered, a federal or other permanent housing subsidy, primarily the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program, formerly known as Section 8. The Housing Agency will require Bridges applicants to complete an HCV application at the time of the Bridges application if they are currently not on the local waiting list. If waiting lists for the area are closed, the applicant must agree to apply to the HCV program as soon as the waiting list opens. The Housing Agency is responsible for notifying Bridges Participants of HCV waiting list openings. A Participant may apply to HCV programs outside of the area but is not required to do so.

Participant files must contain evidence of the HCV application, or other permanent housing option, verifying the status on the waiting list(s) or documentation that the waiting list is closed, and the Participant will sign up as soon as a waiting list opens.

While the Participant is receiving a Bridges subsidy, the Housing Agency, LMH Entity, or Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies will monitor the applicant’s status on the HCV waiting list(s) or assist the Participant to apply for an HCV when the waiting list opens. If a Participant does not accept an HCV, becomes ineligible, or refuses to apply for an HCV, the Participant may be terminated from Bridges.

**3.06 Final Subsidy Review**

The Housing Agency will calculate the subsidy based on gross income and issue the Participant a Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participant Obligations (Bridges Form 6). Income limits for Bridges are based on 50% of area median income as defined by The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

**3.07 Appeals Process**

Applicants and Participants may request an informal hearing to contest a determination made by the LMH Entity, Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies, or Housing Agency concerning eligibility to participate or for continued participation in Bridges. The LMH Entity or Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies is responsible for disability-related eligibility appeals. The Housing Agency will be responsible for housing-related appeals. The Housing Agency will use procedures established for use in its HCV administrative plan, or otherwise written procedures in the case of a Housing Agency without an HCV administrative plan.

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

At an informal hearing, the applicant or Participant must be given an opportunity to view all documents and information used to make the decision and must have an opportunity to present his or her own evidence in support of eligibility or continued eligibility.

The applicant or Participant must be encouraged to have the LMH Entity or Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies assist them in their appeal. The hearing should be conducted by an individual who did not take part in the original decision that is being contested. Applicants and Participants must be notified in writing of the outcome of the hearing and be informed of the reason(s) for the determination.

### **3.08           Calculating Gross Income**

Gross income includes all income expected to be received in the next 12 months for all household members aged 18 and over, excluding the income of a non-related person who is living in the household solely to care for a disabled, handicapped, or elderly household member. When computing gross annual income include the actual income earned from assets, such as interest or dividends.

Gross income includes, but is not limited to:

- Amount, before any payroll deductions, of wages and salaries, overtime pay, commissions, fees, tips and bonuses
- Net income from operating a business, professional trade, or from rental of real or personal property
- Interest and dividends
- Amount of periodic payments received from Social Security, annuities, insurance policies, retirement funds, pensions, disability or death benefits, and similar types of periodic payments
- Unemployment, disability, or worker's compensation or severance pay, and similar types of payments in lieu of income
- Public assistance payments
- Periodic allowances, such as alimony, child support, gifts/contributions received from people not residing with the Participant
- Regular and/or special pay and allowances for a member of the armed services who is the head of household or the spouse of the head of household

Gross income does not include:

- Earned income of minors (age 17 and under)
- Tribal per capita payments
- Minnesota Child Tax Credit

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

- Income of live-in healthcare aides
- Casual, sporadic, or irregular gifts
- Amounts specifically for reimbursement of medical costs, including Medicaid spend-down
- Inheritances, one-time insurance payments, capital gains, settlements for personal losses or Property losses, and similar lump sum amounts
- Educational grants or scholarships paid expressly for tuition, fees, books, or equipment (amounts not specified for these purposes are counted as income)
- Combat pay for a Participant head of household who is in the armed services
- Relocation payments made under the federal Uniform Relocation Act (URA)
- Foster care payments
- Value of allotments such as food stamps and fuel assistance
- Payments made for people participating in federal or state volunteer programs
- Advance payments of the child tax credit authorized under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021
- Emergency rental assistance payments authorized under either Section 501 of Division N of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, or section 3201 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, section 3201

### **3.09 Verification of Income and Assets**

Regarding verification of income and assets, Bridges follows HUD's Housing Choice Voucher Program Guidebook located at [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov), which explains verification by a third party. A Housing Agency may use the procedure it has adopted in its HCV administrative plan, or otherwise written procedures in the case of a Housing Agency without an HCV administrative plan.

Verified information must be no more than 120 days old prior to the award of the Bridges Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participant Obligations. Income and assets to be verified are:

- Records of earned income:
  - Income tax return – state and/or federal (most recent)
  - Paycheck stubs
  - W-2 forms
- Records of other income:
  - Pensions and annuities – most recent check stub from issuing organization

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

- Social Security – current award letter
- Unemployment compensation – determination letter or most recent check stub
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) – award letter or most recent check stub
- Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) – award letter or most recent check stub
- Workers’ Compensation – determination letter or most recent check stub
- Alimony – copy of court order
- Child support – copy of court order
- Educational scholarships/stipends (federal Title IV grants are excluded) – award letter
- Other public assistance – award letter
- Income from assets – credit union/bank/savings and loan statements, etc.

Assets to be evaluated include, but are not limited to:

- Checking, savings accounts, or CDs
- Stocks and bonds
- Mortgage note or property tax statement
- Life insurance policy redemption or cash surrender value
- Net equity in real property
- Personal property held as an investment

### **3.10 Bridges Waiting List**

If the number of applicants for Bridges subsidies exceeds the number of subsidies available, a waiting list must be established. The Cooperative Agreement must specify:

- Party responsible for the waiting list
- Procedure for maintaining the waiting list
- Procedure for making selections from the waiting list (using priorities identified in the Cooperative Agreement)

Bridges is designed to assist people with high needs through housing subsidies that are linked with community mental health services. To achieve this goal, Housing Agencies must prioritize the following populations, with highest priority given to people residing in an Institution or other Segregated Setting who will be homeless upon exit. The following priorities must be identified in the Housing Agency’s waiting list management and tenant selection plan:

1. People living in an Institution, Segregated Setting, or under correctional supervision who will be homeless upon exit.

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

2. People experiencing Homelessness who are assessed as High Priority Homeless through the Coordinated Entry system, including households of individuals, families with children, or youth (age 18+).
3. People who are experiencing Homelessness or at Imminent Risk of Homelessness.

The Housing Agency must submit its waiting list selection plan to Minnesota Housing for review and approval. The plan must be developed jointly by the Housing Agency, the LMH Entity, Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies, and where applicable, tribal nation. Other objective criteria may be included, such as household income or date and time of application, or a preference for transition-aged youth or families with children. Minnesota Housing may consider waiting list selection plan proposals that set aside a specific number of subsidies for households at Imminent Risk of Homelessness, in particular for Service Areas where low rental vacancy rates are contributing to Housing Agencies having difficulty utilizing subsidies.

Applicants who are experiencing Homelessness and claiming preference under priority two or three above must be referred from the local Coordinated Entry (CE), when it is available, with the exception for households who are at Imminent Risk of Homelessness. Verification of any waiting list priority must be kept in the applicant/Participant file. Tribal nation programs and nonprofit organizations may develop an alternate referral practice, which must be approved in writing by Minnesota Housing.

### **3.11 Verification of Bridges Waiting List Priorities and Bridges RTC Eligibility**

The Housing Agency must retain evidence in the Participant file for Participants who are prioritized under priority one above. The LMH Entity is responsible for providing this evidence, which may be noted on the Verification of Mental Illness (Bridges Form 4), or on a separate document, and retained in the Participant file. People residing in an Institution or other Segregated Setting who will be Homeless Upon Discharge are not required to be assessed by or referred from CE.

For the second and third waiting list priorities, required documentation will be provided by CE and will demonstrate the assessment or ranking. Households at Imminent Risk of Homelessness are not required to be referred from CE and must provide evidence such as an eviction notice or notice of condemnation.

Verification that a person is at AMRTC, St. Peter Regional Treatment Center/ Forensic Services, or was prior to entering an IRTS, is required for Bridges RTC. Verification may come from the referral source, which is usually the IRTS, RTC, county, or a tribal nation. People who are eligible but not identified while at AMRTC or Forensic Services may have that evidence confirmed after the fact by the facility. Identified Participants may transition to IRTS or other treatment prior to community housing and retain their eligibility for Bridges RTC. The time frame that they are diverted to other facilities does not affect the Participant's eligibility; they remain eligible if the individual has a legal commitment court document that has been verified and noted in the file.

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

**3.12 Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participant Obligations**

The Housing Agency will issue a Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participant Obligations (Bridges Form 6) to each eligible Participant when they reach the top of the waiting list and are offered a rental subsidy. This document certifies that the Participant is eligible for Bridges and outlines the criteria for an eligible Assisted Unit. The document also describes the process and required documents for obtaining the subsidy as well as the Participant’s obligations.

The Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participation allows the Participant 90 days to locate an eligible Assisted Unit and submit necessary documents to the Housing Agency. If a unit is not located within that timeframe, the Housing Agency has the discretion of extending the Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participant Obligations.

A signed Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participant Obligations is retained in the Participant file after it is issued at a Briefing Session where the program requirements are verbally explained to the Participant. The Housing Agency must inform the Participant during the Briefing Session that if they need additional time to locate an eligible Assisted Unit, they should contact the Housing Agency to request an extension of the certificate.

**3.13 Unit Size (Occupancy Standards)**

The Housing Agency may use the unit size (occupancy standards) established for their HCV Program. If different than the HCV Program, or if the Housing Agency does not have an HCV Program, the occupancy policy proposed for use in Bridges must be submitted to Minnesota Housing for review.

The bedroom size allocated to a Participant must count full-time household members, children expected to reside in the Assisted Unit, and any live-in attendant necessary to care for a household member living with a disability, regardless of age. The Housing Agency must count the child or children:

- Of a pregnant woman
- Being adopted
- Whose custody is being obtained
- In joint custody, as long as the child/children will live in the Assisted Unit at least 50% of the time
- Who are in the unit under foster care
- Who are temporarily absent due to placement in a foster home

The Housing Agency and LMH Entity may establish criteria for granting exceptions to the occupancy standards. Exception criteria may include, but is not limited to, the following:

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

- Unique disability-related circumstances of the Participant
- Availability of the specified size in the Housing Agency's Service Area
- Housing market conditions prevalent in the Housing Agency's Service Area

An exception policy must be in writing and submitted to Minnesota Housing for review and approval and be made part of the Cooperative Agreement.

### **3.14 Rent Limits**

The maximum subsidy available to the Participant is the difference between 30% of their gross income and the area Fair Market Rent (FMR)/Local Payment Standard (LPS) or Contract Rent, whichever is greater. If the rent exceeds these limits, the Participant may pay a maximum of 40% of their gross monthly income. If the rent still exceeds the allowable amount, the Housing Agency may exceed the FMR/LPS whichever is greater by 10% for up to 20% of their portfolio.

The Housing Agency may petition in writing to Minnesota Housing to request an increase higher than 10% and/or to have the increase be applicable to more than 20% of their portfolio. Such requests must further demonstrate hardship (i.e. Participant inability to secure housing with expanded subsidy limit within allowable housing search time). Evidence of three comparable rents must be included in the petition. The Housing Agency's budget and targets must also be taken into consideration. All decisions to accept or reject a petition to increase Contract Rents are subject to approval by Minnesota Housing and at Minnesota Housing's sole discretion.

FMRs are published by HUD annually and can be obtained at [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov). The LPS is established by the local Public Housing Authority (often the same as the Housing Agency and can be found on their website) and is based on the FMR. Tribal nation programs may use an alternate written affordability standard. Any alternate written affordability standard must be approved in writing by Minnesota Housing prior to its implementation, with such approval being at the sole discretion of Minnesota Housing.

### **3.15 Calculating Participant Rent**

The Participant's Rent portion is calculated in a similar manner as the HCV Program, with the exception that Bridges uses gross income, not adjusted income. The minimum Participant Rent is 30% of their monthly income and the maximum payment is 40% of their monthly income. Participants can pay up to 40% of their monthly income if they choose a unit that exceeds the area FMR/LPS.

**NOTE:** The Bridges subsidy cannot pay more than the difference between 30% of the Participant's gross monthly income and the area FMR/LPS or the Contract Rent, whichever is greater.

If zero income is claimed by a Participant at entry into the program, verification must occur again within 90 days and every 90 days thereafter. This verification requires the Participant to

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

provide a signed zero income statement to the Housing Agency until a source of income is established. The LMH Entity or Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies will offer the Participant assistance in obtaining and maximizing income if the Participant wishes. It is important for the Housing Agency, Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies and the LMH Entity to collaborate in order to serve the target number of households by connecting households to eligible benefits and employment services.

The Bridges subsidy may be used in shared housing settings. The subsidy for shared households will be calculated according to the guidelines specified by HUD and Minnesota Housing and are included in section 4.03 of this Program Guide. Rental calculations will be completed using the Computing Gross Income, Participant Rent and Subsidy form (Bridges Form 8). Likewise, households that are comprised of eligible and ineligible members for the HCV Program are considered eligible for Bridges under the prorated formula defined in this Program Guide. Tribal nation programs may use an alternate written standard, which must be approved in writing by Minnesota Housing. Approval will be at Minnesota Housing's sole discretion.

### **3.16 Briefing Session**

The Housing Agency must schedule a Briefing Session for each Participant receiving a Bridges Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participant Obligations for the first time. It is recommended that an LMH Entity representative or other secondary contact such as a friend or family member attend the Briefing Session. The Housing Agency may decide whether to hold individual or group sessions. If group sessions are held, the Participant's income and rent discussions must be conducted privately. A Briefing Session must be available by phone, if requesting and if a Participant is unable to attend in person.

A Briefing Session must cover the following topics:

- Program overview of Bridges
- Explanation of the Participant's obligations listed on the Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participant Obligations (Bridges Form 6)
- Review of the calculation worksheet, Computing Gross Income, Participant Rent and Subsidy (Bridges Form 8) and the amount of the Participant Rent
- Review of the lease approval process and the content of the forms, emphasizing provisions of the Request for Lease Approval (Bridges Form 10) that must be incorporated into landlord generated leases
- Key requirements in state law affecting landlord/Participant relationships
- Responsibility of the Participant to pay the Participant Rent as well as utility expenses not paid by the landlord
- Review of the HQS requirements for Assisted Units
- Service Area in which the Housing Agency may execute Bridges Contracts with landlords

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

- Assistance the LMH Entity, Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies and Housing Agency can provide if a Participant needs help locating a unit or in receiving mental health or other supportive services

At the session, the Participant signs and receives the Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participant Obligations (Bridges Form 6). Participants receive a briefing packet containing the following, or other similar information, which can be found on Minnesota Housing’s website, unless otherwise noted:

- Index to Participant Briefing Packet (Bridges Form 16)
- Participant Rent Payment (Bridges Form 17)
- How to Find a Rental Unit (Bridges Form 18)
- How to Find a Unit that Meets Housing Quality Standards (Bridges Form 21)
- Request for Lease Approval (Bridges Form 10)
- Information on the Fair Housing Act (available from HUD)
- Landlords and Tenants Rights and Responsibilities (available from the Minnesota Attorney General’s Office)
- Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participant Obligations (Bridges Form 6)
- Participant Agreement for Requirements for Continued Eligibility (Bridges Form 7)

The Housing Agency may include additional materials that it deems useful for the Participant.

## **Chapter 4 – Leasing Process**

### **4.01 Freedom of Choice in Selecting Units**

Bridges will assist People with Mental Illness to live in various types of conventional rental housing that may be available in the Housing Agency's Service Area. While Participants may need advice about finding a unit and understanding legal requirements and options for making a selection, they have full responsibility for making the final choice. The Housing Agency, Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies, and LMH Entity may not directly or indirectly reduce a Participant's opportunity to choose from any potentially eligible unit. The information and assistance given to Participants in locating housing must also provide a broad range of choices. The Housing Agency will also need to maintain relationships with shared housing providers (refer to Section 4.03 for more information regarding shared housing).

### **4.02 Eligible Units**

The rental unit must be eligible for use by the Participant household under the local HCV Program or other identified permanent rental subsidy. Bridges Participants may choose from eligible units, which may include:

- Units owned or substantially controlled by a Housing Agency if all of the following apply:
  - All of a property's units are available for occupancy by the general public
  - Rents are market rate and subsidized only with Bridges funds
  - Minnesota Housing receives assurances that a Participant was given choices of other housing in the Service Area
- Units that were constructed with federal or state assistance such as Section 236 or United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development, provided that:
  - Rents approved for Bridges Participants are the market rate for the building
  - No other deep subsidy (i.e., rent based on 30% of income) is provided to the Bridges Participant
- Units that qualify as a shared housing unit as defined by HUD (refer to Section 4.03)

Subsidies cannot be provided for the following:

- Units within or established by public or private Institutions that provide psychiatric or medical services such as:
  - Nursing homes or psychiatric hospitals/facilities
  - Board and care facilities
  - Other facilities such as independent group residences established specifically to serve People with Mental Illness

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

- Landlord occupied units (unless the Participant leases a portion of the unit, such as a basement that contains a private entrance, private bath and private kitchen)
- Lot rental for a landlord occupied manufactured home

#### **4.03 Shared Housing**

Shared Housing is defined by HUD as a single housing unit occupied by an assisted family and another resident or residents. The shared unit consists of both common space for use by the occupants of the unit and separate private space for each assisted family. The unit may be a house or an apartment.

There is a separate lease for each assisted family. Not sharing lease responsibilities with roommates assists with housing stability, removing the obligation to others under the lease. It does not reduce the social obligation to cohabitate, which should be considered by the individual before entering a shared housing arrangement.

While shared housing can be a useful option for rental assistance program Participants to consider, the Housing Agency must be cognizant of potential local ordinances that may prohibit or limit shared housing.

Assisted households can share a unit with either another assisted persons or unassisted persons. The owner of the property may reside in the unit, but housing assistance may not be paid on their behalf. Additionally, a resident owner cannot be related by blood or marriage to the assisted family. A Housing Agency, however, must grant exceptions in program policies where such exceptions are needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability. If approved by the Housing Agency, a live-in aide may reside with the family to care for a person with disabilities. The Housing Agency must approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

Shared housing is required to meet Housing Quality Standards (HQS). The entire unit, including the portion of the unit available for use by the assisted family under its lease, needs to meet HQS, with additional requirements for facility standards, as well as the standards for space and security.

The rents for shared housing will follow the same Fair Market Rent (FMR) and Local Payment Standard (LPS) process that all units use in the rental assistance programs except it will only be a pro-rata share of the total unit rent. Pro-rata is calculated by dividing the number of bedrooms available for occupancy by the assisted family in the private, non-shared space by the total number of bedrooms in the unit. The Utility Allowance will also be a pro-rata calculation.<sup>1</sup> The Participant portion of rent will also remain at 30% of income, not to exceed 40% of income

---

<sup>1</sup> From U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; Notice PIH 2021-05; Office Directors of Public Housing; Issued: January 15, 2021

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

for rents over the FMR/LPS. Use Computing Gross Income, Participant Rent and Subsidy form (Bridges Form 8).

#### **4.04 Utility Allowances**

Starting January 1, 2023, rental assistance is calculated using the Utility Allowance schedule(s) for all Service Areas specified in the Bridges Grant Contract Agreement. The Utility Allowance schedule used for Bridges is the same as the Utility Allowances for the HCV program and can be found on the Housing Authority website for the service area. A copy of the Utility Allowance schedule used for each rental assistance calculation must be kept in the Participant file. Utility Allowances in shared housing would be a prorated based on the number of individuals under lease in the shared housing situation.

#### **4.05 Inspections – Housing Quality Standards**

All properties and units to be leased by Participants must be inspected by a qualified person, someone that was trained by someone that is certified in HQS, or someone that is certified with the Housing Agency. The Housing Agency can also use a contracted housing professional certified or otherwise qualified to perform HQS inspections. A standard federal form (or another version approved by HUD) must be used for reporting the results of the inspection. Units must pass the initial inspection before the Housing Agency makes a payment to the landlord. No subsidy payments from Bridges may be made for a period when the unit was not in compliance with the initial or annual HQS requirements. Exceptions may be considered for unusual circumstances, fully documented in the Participant file, and for which Minnesota Housing has given written approval.

Units must be inspected at least annually. Housing Agencies should schedule the inspection well in advance of the annual due date in order to allow time for repairs, if needed. A copy of all HQS inspections, including passes and fails, must be kept in the Participant's file.

Minnesota Housing allows virtual HQS inspections except under the circumstances listed below:

- Properties built before 1978
- Units owned or leased by landlords unfamiliar to the Housing Agency
- No more than 50% of all units assisted can be inspected virtually each year
- Landlord, Participant, or other party requests a physical inspection
- Landlord and/or tenant Participant does not have the technology or resources to complete a virtual inspection

**NOTE:** Re-inspections of failed items can be completed either as a physical or virtual inspection regardless of the method used in the first inspection. Re-inspections would not count toward the 50% limit on virtual inspections.

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

Virtual inspections must be completed using the same HQS forms, procedures, and standards as physical inspections. Special safeguards may need to be taken to protect Participant information.

**4.06 Portability**

Bridges Participants must lease a unit within the Service Area of the Housing Agency in which they applied. The Bridges subsidy is not portable outside of the Service Area. Participants who wish to relocate must apply to Bridges or other housing resources in their desired area. The LMH Entity and Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies will assist Participants to assess other housing options.

**4.07 Leasing Procedures**

The procedure for processing leases is similar to the HCV Program:

1. The Participant locates a suitable unit with assistance, if needed.
2. The Participant submits a signed Request for Lease Approval (Bridges Form 10).
3. The Housing Agency conducts an HQS inspection.
4. If the unit passes the HQS inspection, the lease and the Bridges Contract (Bridges Form 14) are signed with the landlord.

The term of the lease may not extend beyond one year. The Housing Agency, at its sole discretion, may permit lease terms from one month to 12 months. A copy of the lease, the HQS inspection report, and the Bridges Contract (Form 14) must be retained in each Participant file.

**4.08 Lease Amendment/Extension**

A current lease agreement is required for all Bridges Participants. Some lease agreements may have a provision for a renewal after the initial term. Renewals may be month to month or longer, up to a maximum of one year.

A Lease Amendment/Extension (Bridges Form 13) must be signed at the time that a lease expires and parties to the lease would like to extend the term or when parties to the lease agree to an increase to the Contract Rent.

In the case of income changes, which result in a change to the rental subsidy and the tenant paid rent, a Lease Amendment/Extension (Bridges Form 13) is not required, but verification of income and the calculation of the rental subsidy must be retained in the Participant file. The Housing Agency must notify the landlord and the Participant, in writing, of the new amounts.

**4.09 Security Deposits**

If the Participant cannot afford to make a security deposit for the Assisted Unit and no other resource is available within a reasonable amount of time, the Housing Agency, upon request of the Participant, may pay the security deposit to the landlord using Bridges funds. The security

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

deposit may exceed one month's rent, not to exceed a double deposit (two months' rent total), when no other resources are available, and cannot be paid until after a unit passes inspection. Bridges RTC allows security deposits to be paid up to an amount equal to two months of Contract Rent, if necessary, to help ensure landlord cooperation and if no other resources are available within a reasonable amount of time. If the landlord requires a deposit in excess of one month's rent, other resources may be combined.

If the Participant leaves a unit and the unit has damages or unpaid rent and/or unpaid utilities, then the landlord retains all or part of the security deposit to pay for unpaid rent and/or unpaid utilities or damages to the unit or property. The landlord must provide documentation to the Housing Agency and Participant that the deposit, plus interest, was used to offset expenses.

Participants who are transferring to a new Assisted Unit may request assistance from the Housing Agency for a new security deposit, which may be permitted at the Housing Agency's discretion.

A Participant may keep all or part of the security deposit, plus interest, when any of the following apply. The Participant:

- Leaves a unit and the unit has no damages
- Leaves a unit and the unit has damages in an amount less than the security deposit
- Stays in a unit, leaves Bridges and does not receive an HCV or a permanent subsidy
- Stays in a unit, leaves Bridges and goes onto an HCV or another permanent subsidy

A Participant may retain only the balance of security deposit that has been paid from Bridges funds. If a Participant has left Bridges and reapplied and has been issued a new Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participant Obligations, they may retain the balance of a second security deposit upon the sole discretion of the Housing Agency.

#### **4.10 Payment Terms**

The Bridges subsidy is equal to the Contract Rent less the Participant Rent. Subsidy payments will be made by the Housing Agency to the landlord on behalf of the Participants when all the following payment terms have been met:

- The Participant leases a unit within HUD's published FMR or LPS, whichever is greater.
- The Participant's unit has passed an HQS inspection
- The landlord and the Housing Agency have signed and dated a Bridges Contract
- The Participant and landlord have signed and dated an approved lease

The landlord may not charge more rent for Assisted Units than for comparable unassisted units. The landlord may not assess additional charges to the Participant for items not included in the rent unless all other Participants pay the same charges for the same items. All additional

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

charges (e.g., garage rental, cable TV, storage lockers, pet deposits) must be described in the lease and approved by the Housing Agency.

Subsidy payments on behalf of Participants meeting the above requirements for payment will continue until the Participant receives a permanent housing subsidy, becomes ineligible, voluntarily withdraws from Bridges, or the program terminates.

The Contract Rent plus actual cost of utilities may be paid on behalf of Participants who have a mental health crisis and have their incomes diverted. Such payments may be made for up to 90 days. Written documentation on such situations must be retained in the applicant/Participant record. Housing Agencies, Behavioral Health Service Agencies, and LHM Entities must first utilize the Crisis Housing Fund resources, if available.

#### **4.11 Eligible Payments**

The following types of payments may be made with Bridges funds:

- Direct payment to the landlord for the subsidy portion of the rent
- Payment to the landlord for the security deposit, payment to the landlord for application fees,
- Payment to the utility company for utility connection fees
- Payment to the landlord for the Contract Rent for damage claims and vacancy payments
- Payment to financial assurance/ risk mitigation programs to provide housing to a potential Participant

If the Housing Agency has the budget, approval from Minnesota Housing and provisions in their administrative plan, they may utilize a portion of their Bridges funds for security deposits, damage claims, vacancy payments, application fees, utility connection fees, financial assurance /risk mitigation programs that are necessary to obtain landlord participation or to prevent repeat episodes of Homelessness. All payments will need approval from Minnesota Housing. Housing Agencies are responsible for communicating to the tenants the types of funds available for housing related expenses, how to access them, the frequency a Participant can access the funds, how award amounts are determined, if there is a limit, etc. The Housing Agency will be required to track and report to Minnesota Housing the amount and type of housing related expenses/discretionary fees paid on behalf of tenants, e.g., security deposits, application fees; utility connection fees, damage claims and vacancy payments; and other fees as approved in writing by Minnesota Housing that are utilized to obtain landlord participation or paid on behalf of a Participant to prevent repeat episodes of Homelessness.

**Damage Claims and Vacancy Payments.** A Housing Agency may pay a damage claim or vacancy payment on behalf of a tenant when:

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

- The documented damages were attributable to the household residing in the Bridges Assisted Unit and the damages exceed the security deposit that was collected by the owner at initial occupancy; or
- The owner experiences a vacancy loss when a Bridges assisted Participant leaves the unit without proper notification to re-rent the unit and/or repairs for the damages incurred by the Bridges Participant prolong the ability for the landlord to re-rent the unit. Vacancy claims can be made for the respective unit, for a maximum of 30 days, when the vacancy expenses for the unit (not to exceed the cost of one month's rent) exceed the security deposit collected by the owner at initial occupancy.

Minnesota Housing approval is required prior to the Housing Agency disbursing funds for damage claims and vacancy payments. The Housing Agency shall require appropriate documentation from the landlord regarding the requested damage and/or vacancy claim and shall review such documentation for feasibility prior to submitting the request to Minnesota Housing, who will then review the documentation prior to making an approval decision allowing reimbursement to the Housing Agency for this purpose. Approval may be for a lesser amount than submitted. In addition to claim documentation, Minnesota Housing will consider the impact of such payments on the Housing Agency's grant budget.

**Application Fees, Utility Connection Fees, etc.** A Housing Agency may pay an application fee, utility reconnection fee, and/or other fees, as approved by Minnesota Housing, that are necessary to obtain landlord participation or to prevent repeat episodes of Homelessness when:

- The tenant has exhausted all other mainstream resources such as emergency assistance, energy assistance, and/or local service organizations that usually provide financial assistance for such activities and the requested Bridges payment will assist in getting a Participant into housing and/or prevent a future episode of Homelessness for the tenant.
- Minnesota Housing may grant exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis.

The Participant's file must be properly documented prior to becoming eligible for payments.

**Financial Assurance/ Risk Mitigation Program Fees:** The purpose of this fee is to help support landlord risk mitigation fund programs that are used to pay claims and reduce risk. The fee is paid by the Participant or an organization on behalf of the Participant and is an eligible expense. Applicants may have other eligibility factors and requirements that Minnesota Housing will need to review, and approve, prior to making an approval to the Housing Agency for this purpose. A receipt of payment from the program provider must be maintained in the Participant's file.

## **Chapter 5 – Occupancy Guidelines**

### **5.01 Interim Changes**

All decreases in the Participant's gross monthly income, regardless of the amount, must be verified and the changes implemented on the first day of the next month after the Housing Agency receives the information about the decrease (i.e., a verified decrease in income reported in June would result in a reduced Participant Rent on July 1). Written notice of the change in tenant paid rent and subsidy must also be provided to the Participant and landlord.

Changes related to increases to the Participant's gross monthly income must be handled in compliance with the HCV Program, or other written policies approved in writing by Minnesota Housing.

Participants who wish to add another adult to the lease must inform both the Housing Agency and the landlord in advance. A Participant must be informed that they must seek the landlord's permission to add an additional adult to the Participant's lease or they could be evicted. The landlord may deny permission of an additional adult, based on the landlord's usual Participant screening procedures. All income of the additional adult must be verified and added to the Participant's gross income. A Lease Amendment/Extension (Bridges Form 13) must be used when adding an additional adult to the lease.

The Participant should review the lease for requirements regarding reporting additional minors, but under normal circumstances, the Participant is not required to report to the Housing Agency the addition of a minor to the lease. If a larger unit is needed, a new Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participant Obligations (Bridges Form 6) is issued when the Participant terminates the current lease and seeks other housing.

A Lease Amendment/Extension (Bridges Form 13) may be used if the Participant moves from one unit to another unit in the same building or another building owned by the same landlord. An HQS inspection must be conducted on the new Assisted Unit before the Participant moves or payment from Bridges funding is made.

### **5.02 Annual Recertification**

The income and assets of all Participants must be verified on an annual basis. At each annual recertification, the Participant must sign a new Consumer Agreement for Requirements for Continued Eligibility (Bridges Form 7) and ROI forms, if the Participant has agreed to the ROI. The Participant must be encouraged to update information for a secondary contact at this time. The secondary contact may be a professional caseworker or a friend or family member who can be contacted in the event that the Housing Agency is unable to reach the Participant.

For Participants with an annual lease, the recertification should coincide with the effective date of a new lease. It is not necessary to verify income if the most recent interim change was done within the last 120 days. If the verification indicates that 30% of the Participant's gross monthly

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

income equals or exceeds the Contract Rent for the Assisted Unit for three consecutive months, then the Participant will be declared ineligible because the Participant Rent will be equal to the Contract Rent and no subsidy is provided. Participants who are determined ineligible due to income must be notified in writing and given the option to request an informal hearing if they disagree with the findings.

The landlord may increase the rent only upon the expiration of the lease term and execution of a new or renewal lease. In the case of properties that are subject to a HUD approval increase, such as Section 236 or USDA Rural Development buildings, an increase in rent may be implemented upon HUD approval of the new rent and upon sufficient notice to the Participant and Housing Agency. A new lease or a contract amendment/extension should be used to change the Contract Rent. A copy of the HUD rent approval letter should be inserted in the Participant's file.

When negotiating a renewal rent, the Housing Agency may, at its discretion, use the HCV Annual Adjustment Factors (AAFs) to limit the amount of the landlord's rent increases. If the AAFs are not used, the Housing Agency must determine that the requested rent is reasonable based on the Housing Agency's HCV Program rent reasonableness system. A Participant's Contract rent may not exceed Contract Rents paid by unassisted Participants at the same property.

### **5.03 Lease Termination**

**Participant Chooses to Move.** When a Participant chooses to move, written notice must be given by the Participant to the landlord and Housing Agency in accordance with the lease. If the Participant intends to continue receiving a Bridges subsidy, they must additionally notify the Housing Agency at least 31 days before they intend to move. If the LMH Entity and Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies are aware of a Participant's move, they must notify the Housing Agency if the Participant has not already done so. If the Participant intends to continue receiving a Bridges subsidy after moving, the Housing Agency must issue the Participant a new Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participation Obligations (Bridges Form 6) and Request for Lease Approval (Bridges Form 10). When the Participant locates a new unit, the Housing Agency must use the same procedures as described in the Leasing Process (Chapter 4 of this Program Guide).

**Unit Does Not Meet HQS.** If at recertification the Housing Agency determines that the Assisted Unit is not in compliance with HQS, the Housing Agency must give the landlord reasonable time to correct the deficiencies. The Housing Agency may retain the subsidy until the unit meets HQS. If the landlord fails to comply in reasonable time, the Housing Agency must notify the landlord and the Participant in writing that subsidy payments will be suspended, and the Bridges Contract terminated. If the Participant wishes to continue receiving a Bridges subsidy at a different location, they must be issued a new Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participant Obligations (Bridges Form 6) and Request for Lease Approval (Bridges Form 10). The Housing Agency should notify the LMH Entity.

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

**Landlord Gives Participant Notice to Move.** The landlord may give the Participant notice to move (not connected with an eviction) only if the lease provisions permit such a notice, and the landlord must notify the Housing Agency. The Housing Agency should notify the LMH Entity and Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies. The Participant may wish to locate to a new unit and continue to receive the Bridges subsidy.

**Landlord Issues an Eviction Notice to Participant.** If the landlord issues an eviction notice, the requirements of the lease and state and local laws must be followed, which may permit the landlord to evict the Participant for one or all the following:

- Serious and repeated lease violations
- Violations of federal, state, or local law in connection with the occupancy or use of the Assisted Unit and surrounding premises
- Other good cause

The landlord must send a copy of the eviction notice to the Housing Agency at the same time it is served to the Participant. The Participant may remain eligible, at the Housing Agency's discretion, to participate in Bridges, subject to the provisions of Section 5.04 of this Program Guide and the Consumer Agreement for Requirements for Continued Eligibility (Bridges Form 7) and may seek other housing. The Housing Agency should notify the LMH Entity. The LMH Entity should advise the Housing Agency regarding the determination of ongoing participation in Bridges.

#### **5.04 Termination of Eligibility**

A Participant's eligibility to continue receiving a subsidy under Bridges may be terminated for any of the following reasons:

- 30% of gross monthly income equals or exceeds the full rent
- Failure to apply for, accept, or utilize an HCV or other permanent subsidy
- Failure to report all income, additional adults, or having zero income for over six months
- Illegal drug related or violent criminal activity
- Expired Bridges Certificate of Participation – Statement of Participation Obligations
- Receiving an HCV or other housing subsidy
- Voluntary termination
- The Housing Agency, Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies or LMH Entity is unable to locate the Participant
- Evicted
- Refusal to cooperate with the recertification or HQS inspection process
- Deceased

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

All Participants must have the option to request an informal hearing similar to an HCV informal hearing to contest the termination of their subsidy. The procedures to be used in conducting informal hearings are described in Household Eligibility, Intake and Certification (Chapter 3 of this Program Guide).

Using the Minnesota Housing Rental Assistance Draw Request Form, the Housing Agency must report monthly to Minnesota Housing the reason why Participants ended their participation in Bridges.

Participants who lose their subsidy may reapply to Bridges, unless the Housing Agency has identified issues of fraud or deliberate misrepresentations of information. In the case of an eviction, a Participant may retain their Bridges Certificate of Participation and look for another unit.

It is important for the Housing Agency and Behavioral Health Service Agency to develop relationships with landlords so that they can be notified of lease violations and assist the Participant in being lease compliant.

## **Chapter 6 – Services**

### **6.01 Services Overview**

Bridges does not provide funding for services. Rather, it provides connections to community providers who provide mental health, housing transition, tenancy sustaining services, and outreach services. The LMH Entity and Behavioral Health Service Agency/ Agencies are responsible for providing these connections for Participants to community service providers, typically one or more Behavioral Health Service Agencies. Bridges requires that Participants have choice in what Behavioral Health Service Agency they work with and what services they accept.

### **6.02 Housing Transition and Tenancy Sustaining Services**

Housing transition and tenancy sustaining services are supportive housing services focused on helping the Participant to obtain and retain affordable, permanent housing of the Participant's choice. Service activities include:

- **Housing Transition Services** provide direct support to People with Mental Illness who need assistance with access to housing. The service may start prior to someone leaving AMRTC, St. Peter Regional Treatment Center/ Forensic Services, and/or during transition through IRTS or chemical dependency treatment, or from other Segregated Settings, as part of the apartment search, application, and securing an apartment process.
  - Conduct tenant screening and housing assessment to identify the person's preferences and barriers to successful tenancy
  - Develop an individualized housing support plan based on the housing assessment that identifies barriers, measurable short- and long-term goals, establishes the person's approach to meeting the goal, and identifies needed providers or services to meet the goal
  - Assist with the housing search and application process
  - Identify resources to cover one-time expenses that facilitate access to housing and establishment of a household such as security deposits, moving costs, furnishings, adaptive aids, and environmental modifications
  - Help ensure that the living environment is safe and ready for move-in
  - Assist with arranging for and supporting the details of the move
  - Develop a Housing Support Crisis Plan that includes prevention and early intervention services when housing is jeopardized
- **Tenant Sustaining Services** provide direct services to support People with Mental Illness in sustaining tenancy once housing is secured.
  - Provide early identification and intervention for behaviors that may jeopardize housing

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

- Provide education and training on the roles, rights, and responsibilities of the Participant and the landlord
- Coach on developing and maintaining key relationships with landlords and property managers in order to foster successful tenancy
- Assist with resolving disputes with landlords, property managers, and neighbors to reduce the risk of eviction or other adverse action
- Provide advocacy and linkage to community resources to prevent eviction or other negative housing outcomes
- Assist with the housing recertification process
- Coordinate with the Participant to review, update, and modify their individual housing support and Housing Support Crisis Plans on a regular basis to reflect current goals, needs, and housing retention barriers
- Provide ongoing training on responsible tenancy, lease compliance, and support, with activities related to household management

### **6.03 Outreach Services**

Outreach services are services that are offered to potentially eligible individuals who are homeless or in an Institutional or Segregated Setting to include correctional facilities and connecting with people on Supervised Release and are not connected with a mental health or housing service. They engage the person with immediate services, provide assessments and help them access and transition to sustainable services. The activities of outreach services are comprised of four elements:

- **Identification.** Identifying potentially eligible mental health service recipients, locating unserved or underserved people who are homeless in the community and in Institutions or Segregated Settings
- **Engagement.** Contacting a person in order to engage them in services. Engagement establishes trust, builds a working relationship, and educates the person about service and resource options
- **Assessment.** Ongoing evaluation of a person's strengths, needs, preferences, recovery goals, and their barriers to accessing services, housing, and resources
- **Access.** Assisting the person with identifying their service and housing preferences, helping them to resolve barriers in accessing those preferences, and facilitating the person's transition to sustainable services, housing, and needed resources

### **6.04 Expectations of Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies**

It is expected that the Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies have regular contact with the Participant to assist with establishing and retaining housing and to assist with goal and crisis planning. It is also expected that the Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies maintain

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

regular contact with tenant advocacy services and provides client-selected behavioral health services. If the Participant is eligible, and interested in the service, the Behavioral Health Agency/Agencies should link the Participant to an agency providing Housing Stabilization Services.

The Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies may be a tribal nation, county department, or a contracted provider. The Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies will be a participating member of the LMH Entity, and the roles and responsibilities of this Behavioral Health Service Agency/Agencies need to be in the Cooperative Agreement.

## **Chapter 7 – Fair Housing Policy**

It is the policy of Minnesota Housing to affirmatively further fair housing in all its programs so that individuals of similar income levels have equal access to Minnesota Housing programs, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, familial status, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Minnesota Housing's fair housing policy incorporates the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1968; the Fair Housing Act, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended by the Fair Housing Amendment Act of 1988; and the Minnesota Human Rights Act. Housing providers and other entities involved in real-estate related transactions are expected to comply with the applicable statutes, regulations, and related policy guidance. Housing providers should ensure that admissions, occupancy, marketing and operating procedures comply with non-discrimination requirements. Housing providers and other entities involved in real-estate related transactions must comply with all non-discrimination requirements related to the provision of credit, as well as access to services.

In part, the Fair Housing Act and the Minnesota Human Rights Act make it unlawful, because of protected class status, to:

- Discriminate in the selection/acceptance of applicants in the rental of housing units;
- Discriminate in the making or purchasing of loans for purchasing, constructing or improving a dwelling, or in the terms and conditions of real-estate related transactions;
- Discriminate in the brokering or appraisal of residential property;
- Discriminate in terms, conditions or privileges of the rental of a dwelling unit or services or facilities;
- Discriminate in the extension of personal or commercial credit or in the requirements for obtaining credit;
- Engage in any conduct relating to the provision of housing that otherwise make unavailable or denies the rental of a dwelling unit;
- Make, print or publish (or cause to make, print or publish) notices, statements or advertisements that indicate preferences or limitations based on protected class status;
- Represent a dwelling is not available when it is in fact available;
- Refuse to grant a reasonable accommodation or a reasonable modification to a person with a disability;
- Deny access to, or membership or participation in, associations or other services organizations or facilities relating to the business of renting a dwelling or discriminate in the terms or conditions of membership or participation; or
- Engage in harassment or quid pro quo negotiations related to the rental of a dwelling unit.

Minnesota Housing has a commitment to affirmatively further fair housing for individuals with disabilities by promoting the accessibility requirements set out in the Fair Housing Act, which establish design and construction mandates for covered multifamily dwellings and requires

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

housing providers to make reasonable accommodations and to allow persons with disabilities to make reasonable modifications.

Applicants will be required to submit an Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan at the time of application, to update the plan regularly and to use affirmative fair housing marketing practices in soliciting renters, determining eligibility and concluding all transactions.

As a condition of funding through Minnesota Housing, housing providers are not permitted to refuse to lease a unit to, or discriminate against, a prospective resident solely because the prospective resident has a Housing Choice Voucher or other form of tenant-based rental assistance.

## **Chapter 8 – Fraud Disclosure and Suspension**

### **8.01 Fraud**

Fraud is any intentionally deceptive action or omission made for personal gain or to damage another.

Any person or entity (including its employees and affiliates) that enters into an agreement with Minnesota Housing and witnesses, discovers evidence of, receives a report from another source, or has other reasonable basis to suspect that fraud or embezzlement has occurred must immediately make a report through one of the communication channels described in section 1.06.

### **8.02 Misuse of Funds**

A loan or grant agreement is a legal contract between Minnesota Housing and the borrower or grantee. The borrower or grantee promises to use the funds to engage in certain activities or procure certain goods or services while Minnesota Housing agrees to provide funds to the borrower or grantee to pay for those activities, goods or services. Regardless of the Minnesota Housing program or funding source, the borrower or grantee must use Minnesota Housing funds as agreed, and the borrower or grantee must maintain appropriate documentation to prove that funds were used for the intended purpose(s).

A misuse of funds shall be deemed to have occurred when: (1) Minnesota Housing funds are not used as agreed by a borrower or grantee; or (2) A borrower or grantee cannot provide adequate documentation to establish that Minnesota Housing funds were used in accordance with the terms and conditions of the loan or grant agreement.

Any borrower or grantee (including its employees and affiliates) of Minnesota Housing funds that discovers evidence, receives a report from another source, or has other reasonable basis to suspect that a misuse of funds has occurred must immediately make a report through one of the ways described in section 8.05.

### **8.03 Conflict of Interest**

A conflict of interest, actual, potential, or perceived, occurs when a person has an actual or apparent duty or loyalty to more than one organization and the competing duties or loyalties may result in actions which are adverse to one or both parties. A potential or perceived conflict of interest exists even if no unethical, improper or illegal act results from it.

An individual conflict of interest is any situation in which one's judgment, actions or non-action could be interpreted to be influenced by something that would benefit them directly or through indirect gain to a friend, relative, acquaintance or business or organization with which they are involved.

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- A contracting party is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to Minnesota Housing due to competing duties or loyalties
- A contracting party’s objectivity in carrying out the award is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties
- A contracting party has an unfair competitive advantage through being furnished unauthorized proprietary information or source selection information that is not available to all competitors

Once made aware of a conflict of interest, Minnesota Housing will make a determination before disbursing any further funds or processing an award. Determinations could include:

- Revising the contracting party’s responsibilities to mitigate the conflict
- Allowing the contracting party to create firewalls that mitigate the conflict
- Asking the contracting party to submit an organizational conflict of interest mitigation plan
- Terminating the contracting party’s participation

Any person or entity (including its employees and affiliates) that enters into an agreement with Minnesota Housing must avoid and immediately disclose to Minnesota Housing any and all actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest through one of the ways described in section 8.05.

A contracting party should review its contract agreement and request for proposals (RFP) material, if applicable, for further requirements.

#### **8.04 Suspension**

By entering into any agreement with Minnesota Housing, a contracting party represents that the contracting party (including its employees or affiliates that will have direct control over the subject of the agreement) has not been suspended from doing business with Minnesota Housing. Refer to Minnesota Housing’s website for a list of [suspended individuals and organizations](#).

#### **8.05 Disclosure and Reporting**

Minnesota Housing promotes a “speak-up, see something, say something” culture whereby internal staff, external business partners (e.g., grantees, borrowers) and the general public are encouraged to report instances of fraud, misuse of funds, conflicts of interest, or other concerns without fear of retaliation. You may report wrongdoing or other concerns by contacting:

- Minnesota Housing’s chief risk officer

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

- Any member of Minnesota Housing’s [Servant Leadership Team](#)
- [EthicsPoint](#), the Minnesota Housing hotline reporting service vendor

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

**Appendix A – Terms**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS)	A range of services that helps an individual develop and enhance psychiatric stability, social competencies, personal and emotional adjustment, and independent living and community skills
Adult Mental Health Initiative (AMHI)	A collaboration of county LMHAs and/or a Tribal Nation Mental Health Agency that provide or enhance coordination of the delivery of mental health services required under the Minnesota Comprehensive Adult Mental Health Act
Anoka Metro Regional Treatment Center (AMRTC)	A state psychiatric hospital that serves people who have a mental illness
Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)	An intensive nonresidential treatment and rehabilitative mental health services provided according to the assertive community treatment model.
Assisted Unit	An eligible unit that is occupied by a Participant, who has executed an approved lease with the landlord, is receiving a Bridges subsidy, and whose landlord has executed a Bridges Contract with a Housing Agency
Behavioral Health Service Agency	An agency that promotes mental health, resilience, and wellbeing; the treatment of mental and substance use disorders; and the support of those who experience and/or are in recovery from these conditions, along with their families and communities
Bridges	The Bridges Rental Assistance Program. A state rental assistance program for People with Mental Illness who are waiting for a permanent housing subsidy
Bridges Contract	An agreement executed by a Housing Agency and a landlord describing the terms that must be met for the landlord to receive subsidy payments on behalf of a Participant residing in an eligible unit
Bridges RTC	Bridges Regional Treatment Center. A state rental assistance program for People with Mental Illness who are leaving AMRTC or Forensic Services and are waiting for a permanent housing subsidy
Bridges RTC Participant	A person with mental illness that is eligible participant for Bridges (see participant definition below) and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is hospitalized at the Anoka Metro Regional Treatment Center (AMRTC) or St. Peter Regional Treatment Center, now known as Forensic Services, and does not meet hospital level of care;</li> </ul>

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has significant or complex barriers to accessing and retaining housing; and</li> <li>• Is homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness upon AMRTC or Forensic Services admission or discharge.</li> </ul>
Briefing Session	A meeting at which the eligible applicant receives an explanation of Bridges and instructions for leasing an Assisted Unit
Case Management	Activities that are designed to help People with Mental Illness gain access to services that meet mental health needs. Case Management services include developing an individual community support plan, referring and assisting the person in obtaining needed mental health and other services, ensuring coordination of services, and monitoring the delivery of services
Coordinated Entry (CE)	A centralized or coordinated process designed to coordinate program Participant intake, assessment, and provision of referrals
CoC	Continuum of Care. A community strategic plan to organize and deliver housing and services to reduce the incidence of Homelessness by assisting homeless individuals, youth and families with children to move to self-sufficiency and permanent housing
Community Support Services Program	<p>A program, under the clinical supervision of a Mental Health Professional, designed to provide supportive services for People with Mental Illness to improve their ability to live in the community. Services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach</li> <li>• Education about mental illness, treatment and recovery</li> <li>• Development of competitive employment and work-related opportunities</li> <li>• Opportunities for social, peer and recovery support</li> <li>• Assistance in applying for basic needs and health insurance benefits</li> <li>• Housing Support Services</li> </ul>
Competency Restoration Program	A program that provides comprehensive treatment and evaluation of individuals who have been committed for competency restoration pursuant to Minnesota Rule of Criminal Procedure Rule 20.01 Sub. 7

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Contract Rent	Contract Rent means the total amount of rent specified as payable by Minnesota Housing and the tenant to the landlord for an assisted unit
Cooperative Agreement	An outline of the respective roles and responsibilities of a Housing Agency and an LMH Entity
Coordinated Entry (CE)	A centralized or coordinated process designed to coordinate program participant intake, assessment, and provision of referrals
Correctional Supervision	A community -based sentence which is served by the offender in the community under the control and supervision of correctional officials, subject to conditions which have been set by the court or the Commissioner of Correctional Services
Crisis Housing Fund	A flexible pool of money that provides short-term housing assistance to People with Mental Illness whose income is being used to pay for inpatient psychiatric treatment of 90 days or less
Minnesota Department of Human Services Behavioral Health Division (DHS-BHD)	The Behavioral Health Division at DHS includes adult mental health, children’s mental health and alcohol and drug abuse services. The division works to integrate substance use disorder and mental health with physical health care, to promote successful treatments, and to serve people close to their communities, families and other supports
Fair Market Rent (FMR)	HUD established rent limits for geographical areas
Forensic Services	Formerly known as St. Peter Regional Treatment Center and is the location of the Minnesota Security Hospital, Competency Restoration Program and Transition Services
Grant Contract Agreement	A document Minnesota Housing executes with a Housing Agency outlining respective responsibilities in administering Bridges
Housing Choice Voucher (HCV)	A subsidy provided through the Housing Choice Voucher Program, which is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe and sanitary housing in the private market. Formerly known as Section 8.
HCV Annual Adjustment Factors (AAFs)	The Department of Housing and Urban Development establishes AAFs on the basis of Consumer Price Index (CPI) data relating to changes in residential rent and utility costs.
High Priority Homeless (HPH)	Households prioritized for permanent supportive housing by the Coordinated Entry system

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Homeless/Homelessness	<p>As defined in the Stuart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, a homeless person is an individual who lacks a fixed and adequate nighttime residence. As interpreted by the Minnesota Interagency Task Force on Homelessness and the Behavioral Health Division of the Department of Human Services, this may include, but is not restricted to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An individual or family that lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence; or</li> <li>2. An individual or family whose primary nighttime residence is:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A supervised, publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters and transitional housing for the mentally ill),</li> <li>b. An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or</li> <li>c. A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>The term does not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained under an act of Congress or a state law</p>
Homeless Upon Discharge	<p>Discharge to an emergency shelter or no longer meets criteria to remain in the Institution (e.g. level of care) but cannot be discharged because of lack of a place to go. Discharge to a friend or family member’s home in order to prevent Homelessness may also be considered Homeless Upon Discharge. Discharge to a short-term residential or treatment program, without other housing options, may also meet this definition.</p>
Housing Agency	A housing authority, nonprofit organization, or a Tribal nation
Housing Authority	The powers of a housing authority typically include the power to acquire, construct and operate property and expend and repay funds. A housing authority can also lease, rehabilitate and sell property
Housing Stabilization Services	Housing Stabilization Services is a new Minnesota Medical Assistance benefit to help people with disabilities, including mental illness and substance use disorder, and seniors find and keep housing

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

Term	Definition
	Housing Stabilization is a Home and Community Based Service (HCBS), and providers of Housing Stabilization Services must abide by the HCBS requirements. Information about being a HCBS provider
Housing Support Crisis Plan	A person-centered plan that reflects current needs and addresses existing or recurring housing retention barriers and includes prevention and early intervention services needed when housing is jeopardized
Housing Support for Adults with Serious Mental Illness (HSASMI)	The Housing with Supports grants provide supportive services for adults with serious mental illness who are homeless or who are exiting institutions, and who have complex needs and face high barriers to obtaining and maintaining housing
Housing Support Services	<p>A Community Supports Service Program service that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assists adults in obtaining, moving to and retaining housing</li> <li>• Provides resources for local Public Housing Authorities, subsidized housing programs, realtors, private apartment rental services or similar housing services</li> <li>• Assists in applying for housing program subsidies</li> <li>• Assists in appealing denial, suspension, reduction or termination of a housing subsidy</li> <li>• Mediates and teaches coping and mediation skills to resolve disputes with a landlord or roommate</li> <li>• Provides ongoing support</li> <li>• Provides periodic home visits to ensure health and safety</li> </ul>
Housing Quality Standards (HQS)	A federal housing inspection standard used for inspection of market rate housing to determine that a unit is decent, safe, and sanitary
HUD	The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
Imminent Risk of Homelessness	<p>People who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being evicted from a private dwelling unit, or</li> <li>• Being discharged from a hospital, correctional facility, or other Institution, or</li> <li>• Living in housing that has been condemned by housing officials that is no longer considered meant for human habitation and who have no subsequent housing options identified, and are lacking the</li> </ul>

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

Term	Definition
	resources or support networks needed to retain current housing or obtain temporary or permanent housing
Institutions	Institutions include facilities such as regional treatment centers, community behavioral health hospitals, nursing homes, adult foster care settings, or other hospital or residential treatment centers, jails, and prisons. If you have questions about a particular facility and whether it meets the definition of an Institution, please contact DHS-BHD or Minnesota Housing.
Intensive Residential Treatment Services (IRTS)	Time-limited mental health services provided in a residential setting
LMHA	Local Mental Health Authority. A county operating under the Minnesota Comprehensive Adult Mental Health Act
LMH Entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Local Mental Health Authority (LMHA) operating under the authority of the county</li> <li>• A Tribal Nation Mental Health Agency operating under the authority of the tribal government</li> <li>• An Adult Mental Health Initiative, which is a collaboration of county LMHAs and/or a tribal nation mental health agency that provides or enhances coordination of the delivery of mental health services required under the Minnesota Adult Mental Health Act</li> </ul>
Local Payment Standard (LPS)	The maximum subsidy a PHA can pay on behalf of a family, and a PHA establishes payment standards based on the HUD-established Fair Market Rents (FMR) for the area
Mental Health Professional	<p>A person providing clinical services in the treatment of mental illness who is qualified in at least one of the following ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In psychiatric nursing: a registered nurse who is licensed under Sections 148.171 to 148.285; and: (i) who is certified as a clinical specialist or as a nurse practitioner in adult or family psychiatric and mental health nursing by a national nurse certification organization; or (ii) who has a master's degree in nursing or one of the behavioral sciences or related fields from an accredited college or university or its equivalent, with at least 4,000 hours of post-master's supervised experience in the delivery of clinical services in the treatment of mental illness</li> </ol>

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

Term	Definition
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. In clinical social work: a person licensed as an independent clinical social worker under Chapter 148D, or a person with a master's degree in social work from an accredited college or university, with at least 4,000 hours of post-master's supervised experience in the delivery of clinical services in the treatment of mental illness</li> <li>3. In psychology: an individual licensed by the Board of Psychology under Sections 148.88 to 148.98 who has stated to the Board of Psychology competencies in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness</li> <li>4. In psychiatry: a physician licensed under Chapter 147 and certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology or eligible for board certification in psychiatry, or an osteopathic physician licensed under Chapter 147 and certified by the American Osteopathic Board of Neurology and Psychiatry or eligible for board certification in psychiatry</li> <li>5. In marriage and family therapy: the Mental Health Professional must be a marriage and family therapist licensed under Sections 148B.29 to 148B.39 with at least two years of post-master's supervised experience in the delivery of clinical services in the treatment of mental illness;</li> <li>6. 6) In licensed professional clinical counseling, the Mental Health Professional shall be a licensed professional clinical counselor under Section 148B.5301 with at least 4,000 hours of post-master's supervised experience in the delivery of clinical services in the treatment of mental illness</li> </ol>
Mental Health Service Agency	A mental health provider agency eligible to provide Minnesota Health Care Programs services
Minnesota Comprehensive Adult Mental Health Act	An act that describes the fundamental mental health system in Minnesota and is found at Minnesota Statutes Sections 245.461 – 245.4863
Minnesota Legislature	A bicameral legislature of the U.S. state of Minnesota consisting of two houses: the Senate and the House of

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

Term	Definition
	Representatives. Senators are elected from 67 single-member districts. In order to account for decennial redistricting, members run for one two-year term and two four-year terms each decade. They are elected for four-year terms in years ending in 2 and 6, and for two-year terms in years ending in 0. Representatives are elected for two-year terms from 134 single-member districts formed by dividing the 67 senate districts in half
Minnesota Housing Finance Agency	Also known as Minnesota Housing, is the state’s housing finance agency
Minnesota Health Care Programs	Adults with low incomes who meet eligibility rules may qualify for Minnesota Health Care Programs. Programs include Medical Assistance (MA), MinnesotaCare, Minnesota Family Planning Program and others
MSA	Minnesota Supplemental Aid. Minnesota Supplemental Aid provides cash assistance to help adults who get Supplemental Security Income (SSI) pay for their basic needs
Participant	<p>Under the Bridges program, an eligible Participant is defined as all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The head of household or other household member must be 18 years of age or over and have a diagnosed mental illness as defined in <a href="#">Minn. Stat. 245.462, subd. 20 (a)</a>; a Mental Health Professional must verify the mental illness</li> <li>• The household is eligible to receive a housing choice voucher (HCV) or other permanent housing option or can become eligible based on successful participation in the Bridges program; and</li> <li>• The gross income of the household at the time of initial eligibility is at or below 50% of the area median income for the household size.</li> </ul>
Participant Rent	A portion of the rent payable by the Participant to the landlord
Permanent Supportive Housing	Permanent rental housing affordable to the population served where support services are available to residents. Permanent Supportive Housing is available to individuals and families with multiple barriers to obtaining and maintaining housing, including those who are formally homeless or at risk of Homelessness and those with mental illness, substance abuse disorders, and/or HIV/AIDS.

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Person/People with MI	<p>People with an organic disorder of the brain or a clinically significant disorder of thought, mood, perception, orientation, memory, or behavior that meets both of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is detailed in a diagnostic code list published by the commissioner of Minnesota Department of Human Services and verified by a qualified Mental Health Professional</li> <li>• Seriously limits a person’s capacity to function in primary aspects of daily living such as personal relations, living arrangements, work, and recreation</li> </ul>
Program Guide	A document developed to implement Bridges and Bridges RTC under statutory requirements
Public Housing Authority (PHA)	Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) provide decent, safe, and affordable quality rental housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities
Regional Treatment Center (RTC)	Regional Treatment Center. A facility where the state provides active inpatient treatment for People with Mental Illness, developmental disabilities, chemical dependency and/or elderly who have complex medical conditions and challenging behaviors
Release of Information (ROI)	Release of Information. A signed and dated authorization by the Participant allowing the Housing Agency and relevant LMH Entity to share information about the Participant
Segregated Settings	<p>As defined by the Minnesota Olmstead Plan, “often have qualities of an institutional nature. Segregated settings include, but are not limited to: (1) congregate settings populated exclusively or primarily with individuals with disabilities; (2) congregate settings characterized by regimentation in daily activities, lack of privacy or autonomy, policies limiting visitors, or limits on individuals’ ability to engage freely in community activities and to manage their own activities of daily living; or (3) settings that provide for daytime activities primarily with other individuals with disabilities.” Examples of Institutions or Segregated Settings include a Regional Treatment Center (RTC), a community behavioral health hospital, nursing homes, adult foster care, or other hospital or residential treatment center</p> <p>To evaluate if a setting is potentially segregated, use the three criteria listed in the Segregated Settings definition.</p>

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	Behavioral health residential treatment facilities, including mental health and substance use disorder treatment programs, are typically Segregated Settings. Tribal definitions of Segregated Settings and Institutions, if identified as different than above, will also be considered.
Service Area	A geographic area in which a Housing Agency and a Mental Health Service Agency operate Bridges
Subgrantee	Subgrantee means the government or other legal entity to which a subgrant is awarded and which is accountable to the grantee for the use of the funds provided
St. Peter Regional Treatment Center	Now known as Forensic Services. Minnesota’s earliest psychiatric treatment facility
Supervised Release	A court ordered sentence issued as an alternative to jail or prison. Individuals under supervision (probation or supervised release) are assigned to a probation officer who is responsible for monitoring offenders and ensuring they comply with the conditions ordered by the court and obey laws
Tribal Nation	An American Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, or community that the Secretary of the Interior acknowledges as a federally recognized tribe pursuant to the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994, 25 U.S.C. 5130, 5131
Tribal Nation Mental Health Agency	The agency primarily responsible for tribal nation mental health services
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development	The lead Federal agency helping rural communities grow and prosper. They increase economic development and improve the quality of life in rural places and small towns. They provide loans, grants and technical assistance to build critical infrastructure like broadband, water systems, and hospitals
Utility Allowance	The amount that a housing authority determines is necessary to cover the resident's reasonable utility costs is the utility allowance. Such allowances are estimates of the expenses associated with different types of utilities and their uses

## **Appendix B – Mental Illness**

### 1) Adults

Minnesota Statute 245.462, subdivision 20, Mental Illness

- (a) “Mental Illness” means an organic disorder of the brain or a clinically significant disorder of thought, mood, perception, orientation, memory, or behavior that is detailed in a diagnostic codes list published by the commissioner, and that seriously limits a person’s capacity to function in primary aspects of daily living such as personal relations, living arrangements, work, and recreation.
- (b) An “adult with acute mental illness” means an adult who has a mental illness that is serious enough to require prompt intervention.
- (c) For purposes of case management and community support services, a “person with serious and persistent mental illness” means an adult who has a mental illness and meets at least one of the following criteria:
  - (1) The adult has undergone two or more episodes of inpatient care for a mental illness within the preceding 24 months;
  - (2) The adult has experienced a continuous psychiatric hospitalization or residential treatment exceeding six months’ duration within the preceding 12 months;
  - (3) The adult has been treated by a crisis team two or more times within the preceding 24 months;
  - (4) The adult:
    - (i) Has a diagnosis of schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, or borderline personality disorder;
    - (ii) Indicates a significant impairment in functioning; and
    - (iii) Has a written opinion from a mental health professional, in the last three years, stating that the adult is reasonably likely to have future episodes requiring inpatient or residential treatment, of a frequency described in clause (1) or (2), unless ongoing case management or community support services are provided;
  - (5) The adult has, in the last three years, been committed by a court as a person who is mentally ill under chapter 253B, or the adult’s commitment has been stayed or continued; or
  - (6) The adult (i) was eligible under clauses (1) to (5), but the specified time period has expired or the adult was eligible as a child under section 245.4871, subdivision 6; and (ii) has a written opinion from a mental health professional, in the last three years, stating that the adult is reasonably likely to have future episodes requiring inpatient or residential treatment, of a frequency described in

**MINNESOTA HOUSING –  
Bridges and Bridges Regional Treatment Center Rental Assistance Programs Guide**

clause (1) or (2), unless ongoing case management or community support services are provided.

- (7) The adult was eligible as a child under section 245.4871, subdivision 6, and is age 21 or younger.

2) Child with Severe Emotional Disturbance

Minnesota Statute 245.4871, subdivision 6, for purposes of eligibility for case management and family community support services, “child with severe emotional disturbance” means a child who has an emotional disturbance and who meets one of the following criteria:

- a) The child has been admitted within the last three years or is at risk of being admitted to inpatient treatment or residential treatment for an emotional disturbance; or
- b) The child is a Minnesota resident and is receiving inpatient treatment or residential treatment of an emotional disturbance through the interstate compact; or
- c) The child has one of the following as determined by a mental health professional:
  - i. Psychosis or a clinical depression; or
  - ii. Risk of harming self or others as a result of an emotional disturbance; or
  - iii. Psychopathological symptoms as a result of being a victim of physical or sexual abuse or of psychic trauma within the past year; or
- d) The child, as a result of an emotional disturbance, has significantly impaired home, school, or community functioning that has lasted at least one year or that, in the written opinion of a mental health professional, presents substantial risk of lasting at least one year.