



July 19, 2019

To: HCBS-AMH Recovery Management Entities

Subject: Broadcast Message No. 19.031
Becoming a Qualified Referral Agent under the Section 811 Project
Rental Assistance Program

This broadcast provides Home and Community-Based Services – Adult Mental Health Recovery Management Entities (RMEs) guidance on how to become a Section 811 Project Rental Assistance (PRA) Program Qualified Referral Agent (RA).

Background

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development approved the Section 811 PRA option as part of the Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities Program, as authorized by the Frank Melville Supportive Housing Investment Act of 2010. The PRA program:

- Connects services and expands affordable housing options for non-elderly persons (ages 18 - 62) who have a disability combined with an extremely low income;
- Creates opportunities for persons with disabilities to live as independently as possible through the coordination of voluntary services and providing a choice of subsidized, integrated rental housing options;
- Provides subsidies for integrated rental units within affordable housing developments financed by other funding sources and occupied by people both with and without disabilities; and
- Incentivizes owners and developers to create additional supportive housing by accessing Medicaid and state funding streams.

Section 811 PRA Program in Texas¹

On March 13, 2015 and April 25, 2016, Texas received two federal grants totaling \$24 million to implement the PRA program. This funding provides project-based rental assistance for extremely low-income persons with disabilities linked with long term services.

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) partners with Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and the Department of Family and

¹ <https://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/section-811-pra/index.htm>

Protective Services to operate this program in partnership with local participating multifamily properties and local disability service providers and coordinators.

PRA is not statewide. Participating properties are located in the following eight metropolitan areas:

- Austin-Round Rock
- Brownsville-Harlingen
- Corpus Christi
- Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington
- El Paso
- Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land
- McAllen-Edinburg-Mission
- San Antonio-New Braunfels

Target Populations/PRA Eligibility in Texas

The PRA program prioritizes the following populations:

- People with disabilities living in certain institutions. People transitioning from nursing facilities and intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities may not have access to affordable housing in their communities. Individuals may apply for PRA up to 12 months prior to discharge from the institution.
- People with serious mental illness (SMI). Individuals engaged in services often face challenges due to housing instability. Stable, integrated, and affordable housing provide individuals the opportunity to fully engage in rehabilitation and treatment, greatly improving their prospects for realizing their full potential in the community.
- Young adults (age 18 and older) with disabilities exiting foster care. These individuals benefit from the stability of long-term housing and comprehensive support services, enabling them to avoid homelessness.

An applicant must be referred by a qualified RA. Upon approval, tenants pay no more than 30 percent of their income on rent and utilities. However, income is not a program eligibility requirement.

Texas RA Requirements

Each applicant must complete the required training located on the state-funded [Centralized Training Infrastructure](#) platform and notify TDHCA. After TDHCA approves, TDHCA will grant access to a secure portal and provide instructions on how to upload applications.

An RME may allow multiple Recovery Managers to become RAs and submit/track their own applications, or limit the number of RAs within their organization and require these individuals to submit/track applications from within the organization and operate as points of contact with HHSC and TDHCA. In all cases, the RME is responsible for:

- Submitting completed applications, providing updated information when needed, and remaining connected to the applicant throughout the process (i.e., from submission of application to move-in and provision of ongoing support services). This ensures timely notifications when units become available and, if issues arise, when an individual or family is housed; and
- Maintaining a tracking log of all applications submitted by RAs within the organization.

Waitlist Management

TDHCA manages waitlists for the various properties. When a unit becomes available, TDHCA notifies the applicant, the applicant's RA, and the designated HHSC contact.

If an applicant cannot be located, TDHCA attempts to contact the applicant through others listed on the application. TDHCA concurrently provides the application to the property owner to contact the applicant in order to schedule an appointment to complete the screening process. RAs shall assist the individual or family by attending screening or orientation appointments, and with move-in.

Each individual participating property has its own waitlist and waitlist times vary greatly. Housing placement is not guaranteed. Local Referral Agents, who are certified by TDHCA and HHSC, generate referrals to the program. Applicants are reviewed for program criteria by TDHCA, and when vacancies occur, the applicants are screened based on each property's unique tenant selection criteria.

Participating tenants can choose from a list of properties that have elected to participate in the program. Assistance is not time limited, and the amount of rental assistance provided is based on the household's income. Service participation is voluntary, but referrals must come from the established network of certified 811 Referral Agents.

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Long-Term Services and Supports

After an individual is housed, the RME shall offer support services to assist in maintaining housing. Supports may include but are not limited to: establishing (through signed release) a relationship with the property manager to ensure notification of issues; ongoing support services offered to the tenant with the goal of assisting with housing maintenance; and advocating on behalf of the person with SMI if they become in jeopardy of losing their housing.

For additional information please visit <http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/section-811-pra/index.htm> or contact:

- Spencer Duran, Section 811 Manager, at (512) 475-1784
- Bill Cranor, Section 811 Program Coordinator, at (512) 936-7804
- Monica McCarthy, Section 811 Program Specialist, at (512) 475-3865

Providers can view this broadcast at <https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/behavioral-health-services-providers/home-community-based-services-adult-mental-health> under "IDD-BH Broadcast Messages."

If you have questions about this broadcast, please email HCBS-AMH.Services@hhsc.state.tx.us.

Sincerely,

[signature on file]

Trina K. Ita, MA, Associate Commissioner
Behavioral Health Services
Medical and Social Services Division