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## **SECTION 811 PROJECT RENTAL ASSISTANCE (PRA) PROGRAM POTENTIAL TENANT BROCHURE**

The Section 811 Project Rental Assistance (PRA) Program provides affordable and accessible housing for adults between the age of 18 and 61 with disabilities throughout the State of Maine.

People who use this program generally pay no more than 30% of their income for rent and utilities while continuing to have access to services. The Section 811 PRA Program is not a tenant-based program where the tenant retains the housing assistance when they move. Instead, the housing subsidy is connected to the apartment.

### **IN ORDER TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE PRA PROGRAM, YOU MUST:**

- Be between the ages of 18 and 61;
- Be extremely low-income, most single persons who receive SSI will meet this requirement;
- Disabled as defined by the Section 811 PRA Program, in Maine the following populations qualify:
  - ✓ MaineCare Section 18: Home and Community Based Services for Adults with Brain Injury
  - ✓ MaineCare Section 19: Home and Community Benefits (HCB) for the Elderly and for Adults with Disabilities
  - ✓ MaineCare Section 20: Home and Community Based Services for Adults with Other Related Conditions
  - ✓ MaineCare Section 21: Home and Community Benefits for Members with Intellectual Disabilities or Autistic Disorder
  - ✓ MaineCare Section 29: Support Services for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities or Autistic Disorder
  - ✓ The following group will have priority status: Persons with disabilities living in institutions eligible for Homeward Bound MFP

### **HOW DO I APPLY FOR THE PRA PROGRAM?**

Your Referral Agent/Case Manager can assist you with applying to the program and selecting properties.

### **WHAT IS A REFERRAL AGENT/CASE MANAGER?**

Your Referral Agent/Case Manager is a person who will help applicants through the PRA Program process, from pre-screening through move-in. After moving into a PRA Program apartment, you will continue to have access to voluntary services.

## **WHERE CAN I LIVE?**

MaineHousing maintains a list of all properties participating in the program and you will be notified when an available unit is ready for occupancy in the area(s) you selected and you are at the top of the waitlist.

## **WHAT IF I CHANGE MY MIND AFTER I APPLY?**

No problem, but tell your Referral Agent/Case Manager so that they can update the waiting list.

## **FAIR HOUSING RIGHTS**

Federal and state laws protect people with disabilities from housing discrimination. This means housing providers:

- Cannot exclude you from housing because of your disability;
- Must ask you the same questions as all other applicants to the property;
- Cannot ask you questions about your disability – such as your diagnosis or medication you take – unless necessary to determine the need for an accommodation; and
- Must provide reasonable accommodations.

A reasonable accommodation is a change to a policy, program or services to allow a person with a disability to participate fully. For example, if a property had a “no-pets” policy, it must make an accommodation for someone with a disability who has a service animal, without which they could not live in the community. Talk with your Referral Agent/Case Manager about any problems with rental history that relate to your disability. You may be entitled to a reasonable accommodation.

## **WILL I HAVE TO ACCESS SERVICES ONCE I AM A TENANT?**

You will continue to have access to the same voluntary services you are already eligible for. In the PRA Program, services are voluntary. You can decide which services you want to use and when. If you decide you don't want or need services, you will be able to keep your apartment. You may find, however, that services can help you comply with your lease.

## **TENANT RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is equally important to remember that as a tenant you must meet the terms of your lease in order to stay in the unit. This means you must:

- Pay your portion of the rent on time;
- Maintain your unit in clean, sanitary and safe condition;
- Get along with other tenants; and
- Avoid illegal activity.

## **WHAT IF I HAVE A PROBLEM WITH MY LANDLORD?**

The Section 811 PRA Program has a dispute resolution process for tenants who have problems with their housing that they cannot resolve directly with their landlord or even with the assistance of their Case Manager. A Dispute Resolution Team has been established by MaineHousing and the Department of Health and Human Services.