



Entry Form 2017 Annual Awards for Program Excellence

Entry Deadline: Thursday, June 15, 2017, Midnight ET

Each entry must include a completed entry form. Please complete a form for each entry your HFA is submitting. The completed entry form will become the first page of your entry.

This form is a fillable PDF. Type your information into the entry form and save it as a PDF. Please do not write on or scan the entry form. **Questions: Call 202-624-7710 or email awards@ncsha.org.**

Entry Title: Enter your entry's title exactly as you wish it to be published on the NCSHA website and in the awards program.

Category:

Subcategory:

Entry Summary: A 15-word (max) summary of the program, project, or practice you are entering.

HFA:

HFA Staff Contact:

Phone:

Email:

Visual Aids:

Are you mailing to NCSHA 10 copies of any visual aids that cannot be included in your entry PDF? Yes No

Payment:

My HFA is mailing a check to NCSHA.
My HFA is emailing the credit card authorization form to awards@ncsha.org.



MISSISSIPPI HOME CORPORATION

Nominates



Creating Housing Options In Communities for Everyone Program

for the
**2017 NCSHA
Program Excellence Award**

HFA: Mississippi Home Corporation
Entry Title: Mississippi CHOICE Program
Entry Category: Special Needs Housing
Entry Subcategory: Housing for Persons with Special Needs



Research shows that combining stable affordable housing with supportive services significantly helps individuals overcome difficult challenges including homelessness and serious mental illness to lead stable, productive lives. In 2014 Mississippi began a program to meet the state's obligations under the 1999 Supreme Court decision in OLMSTEAD V. LC. Access to long-term mainstream housing resources, such as Housing Choice Vouchers, Public Housing units, or other subsidized housing, can be challenging due to closed or long wait lists, bureaucratic requirements and regulations. This presentation focuses on one component of Mississippi's initiative, the state's first time ever funding for rental assistance using state general funds which takes the form of a bridge rental subsidy program, marketed as CHOICE ("*Creating Housing Options in Communities for Everyone*").

INNOVATIVE

Mississippi's CHOICE rental program includes innovative features. 1) MHC, the state HFA, had never operated rental assistance and needed to develop all new procedures to manage CHOICE. 2) CHOICE pays for housing placement services to clients and monthly rental payments for up to 12 months. 3) Some clients need more than 12 months of assistance. To encourage Public Housing Authorities to accept CHOICE clients into the Housing Choice Voucher, CHOICE will pay PHAs for the cost to transition a tenant from CHOICE to HCV. This payment varies depending on how quickly the PHA transitions the renter with higher payments for earlier transitions. 3) During a pilot phase lasting six months, the state contracted with Community Mental Health Centers and two of the state's Continua of Care (CoC) agencies to provide transitional services to eligible individuals. In January 2017 the state began contracting solely with the CoCs for placement services.

ABILITY TO BE REPLICATED

Mississippi's program is replicable because it uses entities available in most areas of the country. The region must have three primary partners: an experienced Continua of Care Agency or Emergency Solutions Grant provider, a Community Mental Health Center presence with Assertive Community Treatment Team capability as well as individualized case management capability; a Public Housing Authority with public housing or Housing Choice Vouchers that can serve longer term rental assistance needs. In Mississippi, MHC served as a financial agent for state rental funding, contract administrator ensuring the services provided meet legislative intent.

Because bridge rental assistance is relatively short term, the CHOICE program was aligned with HUD's Housing Choice Voucher program. Areas of alignment included:

- The Public Housing Authority have a disability preference worded in a way that can take referrals of SMI individuals or updated its disability preference to include in the definition of disability persons with SMI diagnosis transitioning from the CHOICE program.
- Housing units rented with CHOICE funds must meet HUD Housing Quality Standards; rents set at the area Fair Market Rent. Units must meet HUD HCV Housing Quality Standards, 'rent reasonableness', and PHA payment standard requirements;
- Participants assisted with the bridge subsidy must agree to accept a HCV when one becomes available;
- Housing owners who rent to CHOICE recipients must agree to accept HCV payments from the PHA;
- Participants transitioning to the HCV program must meet basic HCV eligibility criteria;
- Participants' rent contribution must be calculated according to HCV standards; and
- Participants must agree to pay rent to the owner of their unit in accordance with all HCV program requirements.

Started as a pilot program funded in State 2015 Legislative session to "begin immediately", CHOICE has developed into a reliable channel for the eligible population to find affordable housing.

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Entry Subcategory: Housing for Persons with Special Needs

Total State appropriations FY 2015 – 2018: \$5,257,828,
 Funds for transition services and rent payments 90%: \$4,711,000
 Projected number to be assisted with current funding: 580
 Number housed through May 2017: 171

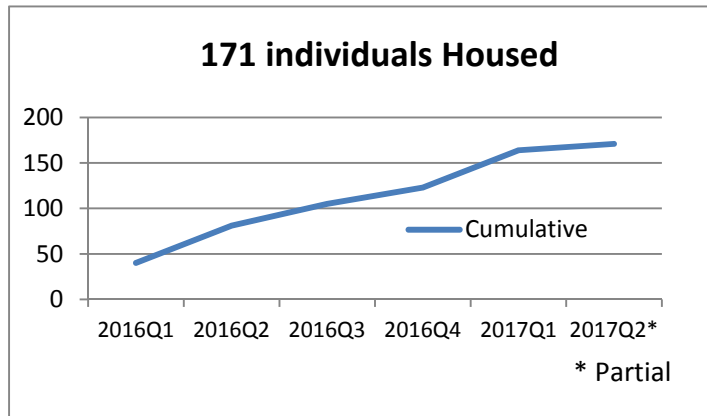
RESPONDING TO THE NEED

CHOICE is Mississippi's response to Olmstead Initiative which concluded that there was unjustified segregation of persons with disabilities which constitutes discrimination in violation of the Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and also stated that public entities must provide community based services to persons with disabilities when 1) such services are appropriate; 2) the affected persons do not oppose community-based treatment; and 3) community-based services can be reasonably accommodated, taking into account the resources available to the public entity and the needs of others who are receiving disability services from the entity. The program targets individuals in one of the following priority populations: 1) Discharged from a State psychiatric hospital or intermediate care facility after a stay of more than ninety (90) days; 2) Discharged from state hospital within 2 years and had multiple hospital visits due to mental illness, have been arrested or incarcerated due to conduct related to mental illness, or have been homeless one full year or had 4 or more bouts of homelessness within 3 years; 3) meet the 42 US Code Section 11302 definition of homeless, including lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

MEASURABLE BENEFITS TO TARGETED CUSTOMERS

Over 50% of Clients Housed within 30 Days

Days to House	Number	Share
<= 30	92	54%
30+	57	33%
In Process	22	13%
Total	171	



Evidence that Income Increases with Housing Stability

Income at Intake	Count	Average Income
With Income	73	\$742
No Income	98	0
Income at Update (date varies)	38	\$854

PROVEN TRACK RECORD OF SUCCESS IN THE MARKETPLACE

- Residents housed in 41 different communities across Mississippi, the most being 27 in Pascagoula.
- Residents housed in 71 different properties. Some properties have placed multiple renters.

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BENEFITS THAT OUTWEIGH COSTS

- Program development cost: \$85,000 (MHC staff and outside counsel July – Dec 2016)
- Average cost of housing search and placement services per resident paid to CoC agencies: \$1,015
- State administration average cost per placement to date for 171 placements: \$640
- Average rent per month Jan 2016 – May 2017 based on 171 placements: \$525/mo.
- Total cost/client 12 months for housing placement and follow up, rent, state administration: \$8,015

EFFECTIVELY EMPLOY PARTNERSHIPS

Mississippi Home Corporation - Program design, monitor agencies providing transition services, reimburse agencies for services and rent payments.

Continua of Care Agencies; Mississippi United to End Homelessness; Open Doors Homeless Coalition - Receive referrals from State Hospital, Community Mental Health Centers, homeless services agencies; find housing, counsel clients, assess move-in needs, assist with deposits, monthly monitoring to assess stability.

Mississippi Department of Mental Health - Coordinate services from State Hospital and Community Mental Health Center (CMHC) Services; monitor eligibility of clients as having Serious Mental Illness diagnosis; assist in connecting CMHC services delivered to community-based residents as needed.

Regional Public Housing Authority - Coordinate services from State Hospital and Community Mental Health Center (CMHC) Services; monitor eligibility of clients as having Serious Mental Illness diagnosis; assist in connecting CMHC services delivered to community-based residents as needed.

ACHIEVE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The program is still in early stage of implementation. A high percentage of clients (47% of exits) completed the program, only 4 (20% of exits) were due to criminal activity or non-compliance.

Destination at Exit	Count	Share
Completed program	9	47.4%
Criminal activity / destruction of property / violence	1	5.3%
Left for a housing opportunity before completing program	3	15.8%
Non-compliance with project	3	15.8%
Other	3	15.8%
Grand Total	19	100.0%

A high percentage (68%) left for permanent housing. Only 2 (10.6%) went into jail or substance abuse facility.

Destination at Exit	Count	Share
Permanent Housing	13	68.4%
Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy	5	26.3%
Rental by client, no housing subsidy	5	26.3%
Staying or living with family, permanent tenure	2	10.5%
Owned by client, no housing subsidy	1	5.3%
Other Outcome	6	31.6%
Client refused	1	5.3%
Jail, prison or juvenile detention facility	1	5.3%
Long-term care facility or nursing home	1	5.3%
Staying or living with family, temporary tenure (e.g., room, apartment or house)	1	5.3%
Substance abuse treatment facility or detox center	1	5.3%
West - California	1	5.3%
Grand Total	19	100.0%



Creating Housing Options In Communities for Everyone

*A Partnership between Mississippi Home Corporation,
Mississippi Department of Mental Health, Mississippi
Division of Medicaid, and Mississippi's Community Mental
Health Centers*

CHOICE provides rental assistance to make housing affordable for individuals with serious mental illness. Community Mental Health Centers provide services appropriate to the individual based on their individual needs.



Applicants will be assisted in order of the following priority:

Priority 1: Individuals being discharged from a State psychiatric hospital after a stay of more than ninety (90) days; or, nursing facility, or intermediate care facility for individuals with intellectual disabilities after a stay of more than ninety (90) days; or

Priority 2: Individuals who have been discharged from a State psychiatric hospital within the last two (2) years and;

- Had multiple hospital visits in the last year due to mental illness; or
- Are known to the mental health or state housing agency to have been arrested or incarcerated in the last year due to conduct related to mental illness; or
- Are known to the mental health or state housing agency to have been homeless for (1) full year or have had four (4) or more episodes of homelessness in the last three (3) years.

Priority 3: Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes a subset for an individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for ninety (90) days or less and who resides in an emergency shelter or a place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that situation.

**For more information contact your local
Community Mental Health Center**

ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE UNDER CHOICE

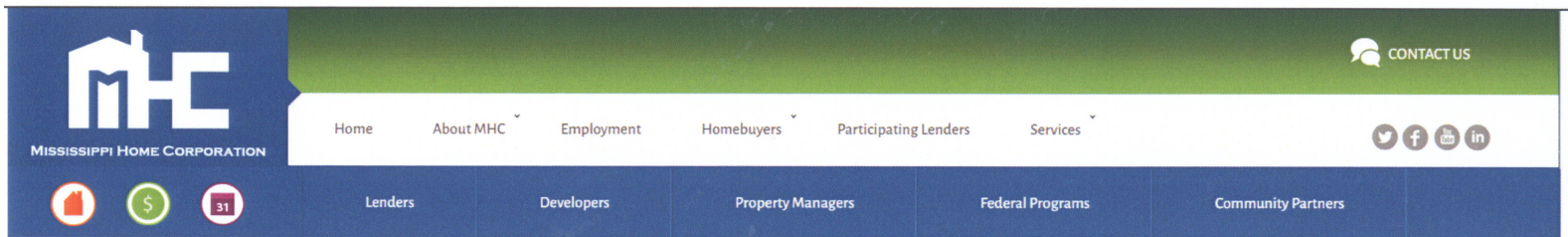
- Rental assistance
 - Tenants pay 15% of income toward rent.
 - If a person is employed and rent is 30% or less of gross income, rent assistance is not available under CHOICE.
 - CHOICE pays 100% of rent if tenant has applied for Supplemental Security Income or Supplemental Security Disability Income but benefits have not started at the time the individual moves into housing.
- Guided assistance to find suitable housing using www.mshousingsearch.org.
- The individual will be reviewed for eligibility for HUD Housing Choice Voucher or Public Housing which may affect the length of time CHOICE assistance will be provided.
- Depending on individual need, CHOICE may also cover:
 - Rental application fee
 - Rental security deposit
 - Rental arrears
 - Utility deposit
 - Utility arrears

The individual will be reviewed for eligibility under Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) grant program. Eligibility for these programs may reduce assistance provided under CHOICE. These programs may provide one or more of the following services:

- Job search assistance
- Financial management
- Negotiations with landlords
- Transportation, if available
- Transition assistance



CHOICE Program page on MSHomeCorp.com



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Assistance Available Under CHOICE

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[Guided assistance to find suitable housing using MSHousingSearch.org](#)

Important Information for Landlords

[Information for Owners & Landlords](#)

[CHOICE Housing Assistance Payment Contract](#)

[CHOICE Regions](#)

[Landlord Checklist](#)

[MSHousingSearch.org Landlord Screenshots](#)

[MHC Facebook](#)

[News & Events](#)

[News & Updates Sign-Up](#)



CHOICE Program Information Card

5.5x8.5" card, front and back



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ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE UNDER CHOICE

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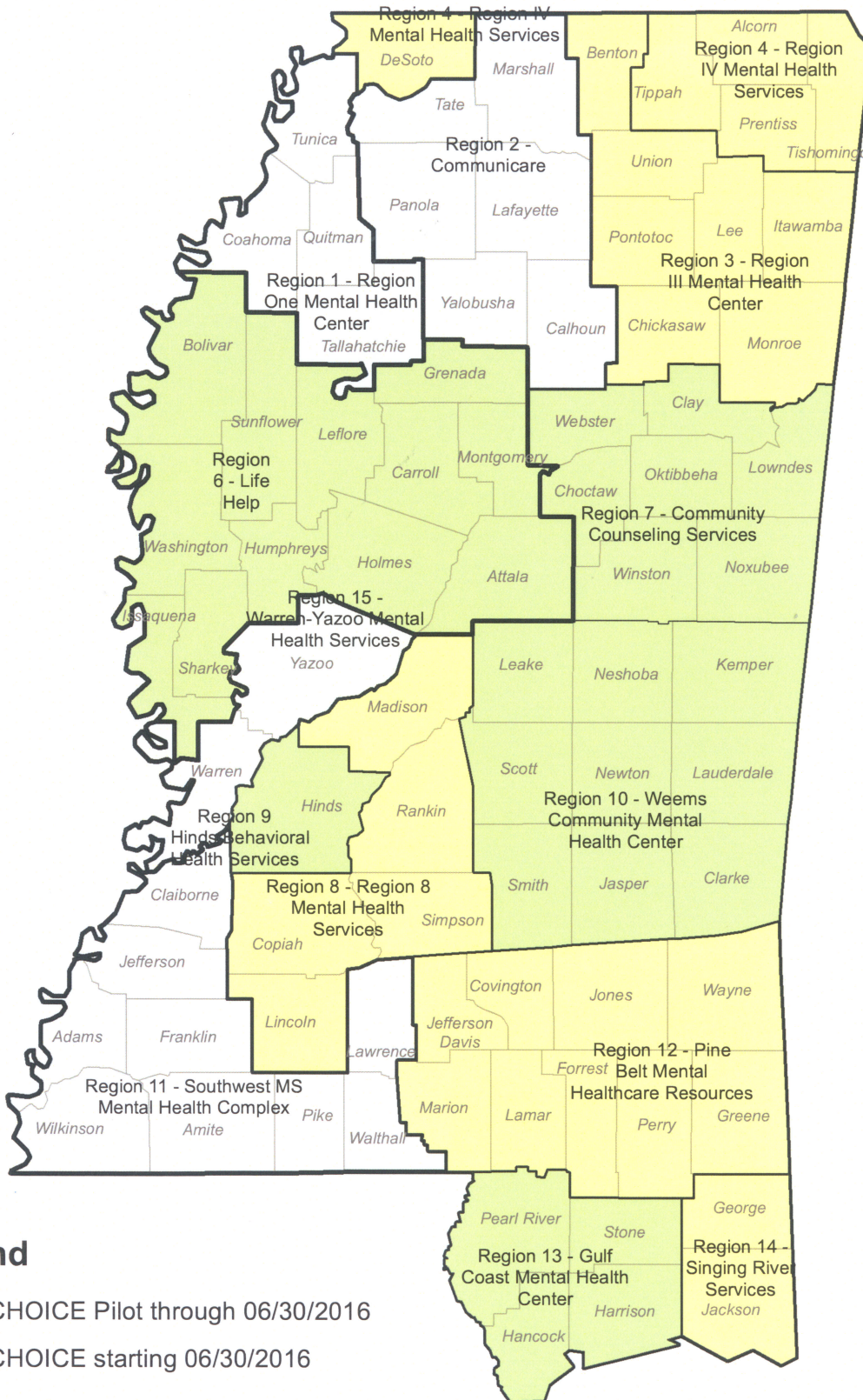
**For more information contact your local
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Creating Housing Options In Communities for Everyone



Community Mental Centers



Legend

- CHOICE Pilot through 06/30/2016
- CHOICE starting 06/30/2016



Creating Housing Options in Communities for Everyone

Property Owners and Property Managers Requirements for Participation in the CHOICE Program

Leasing

1. Allow Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspection (Form HUD-52580) of rental units when property is selected by a CHOICE recipient by Mississippi Home Corporation (MHC) staff or designated Public Housing Authority.
2. Execute the property's standard Lease Agreement with CHOICE tenant.
3. Execute the MHC Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract for the unit occupied by CHOICE tenant.

General Requirements

1. Maintain current vacancy information in www.MSHousingSearch.org. When registering the property in MSHousingSearch.org, the development must complete the section on the "Special Needs Populations: (private) page," and checking at least the "Mental Health Consumer" option.
2. Identify property Point of Contact (POC) for matters dealing with the local Community Mental Health Center (CMHC) and MHC.
3. Responsibilities of the property's POC
 - Establish contact with CMHC POC and notify the CMHC of changes in the property POC.
 - Respond to inquiries and requests for assistance received from CMHC regarding prospective or current CHOICE tenants.
 - Incidents/grievances involving CHOICE tenant that risk tenant's continued occupancy of the unit:
 - Report incident to CMHC POC as soon as possible, but no longer than 24 hours, if the incident cannot be resolved through normal property management procedures
 - If situation cannot be resolved with assistance from CMHC POC, notify POC at Mississippi Department of Mental Health and MHC.
 - Report any occupancy changes of tenant's unit to CMHC POC, such as number of people living in the unit
 - Rent reasonableness will be conducted to ensure that rents charged by owners to Housing CHOICE Voucher program participants are reasonable.
4. If property is in the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, maintain compliance with MHC's program requirements

Dear Property Provider:

The State of Mississippi has begun an initiative to provide rental assistance to make housing affordable for individuals with serious mental illness. The program is called CHOICE and by providing housing to CHOICE participants, a landlord can have access to a steady stream of qualified residents who have the services and supports needed to be good tenants, but lack affordable housing options.

To help, landlords are encouraged to check the “Mental Health Consumer” option within the “Special Needs Populations” feature (found under the [My User Info](#) tab within your account on [MSHousingSearch.org](#)). This can connect you with local agencies providing subsidies and services to qualified renters. Affordable units are always in great demand.

Please update your listings on [www.MSHousingSearch.org](#) or call toll-free at 1-877-428-8844 for assistance.

For questions regarding the CHOICE Program, please contact Demetris Neyland at 601.718.4667 or at demetris.neyland@mshc.com

Thank you for listing on [MSHousingSearch.org](#). You are an important part of our efforts to provide housing to people in need, and we couldn't do it without you!

Step one: Login to [MSHousingSearch.org](#) or create an account to list properties

Home Find Housing List Housing Info & Links About Us Contact Us

Welcome to [MSHousingSearch.org](#), a free resource to help you find a home that fits your needs and budget. Property providers can list apartments or homes for rent any time, which means that our list is always current.

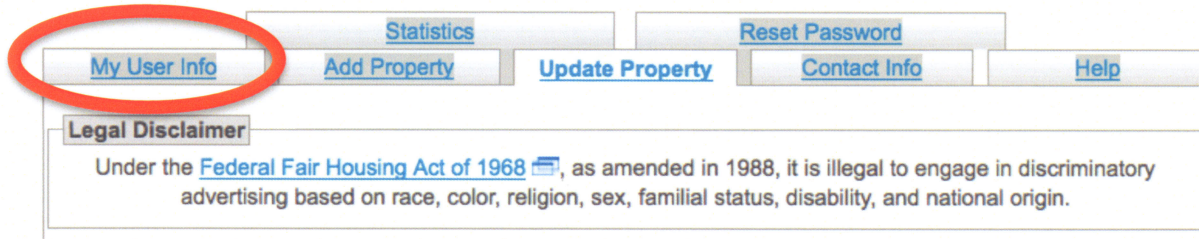
Find a Home to Rent

List a Home to Rent

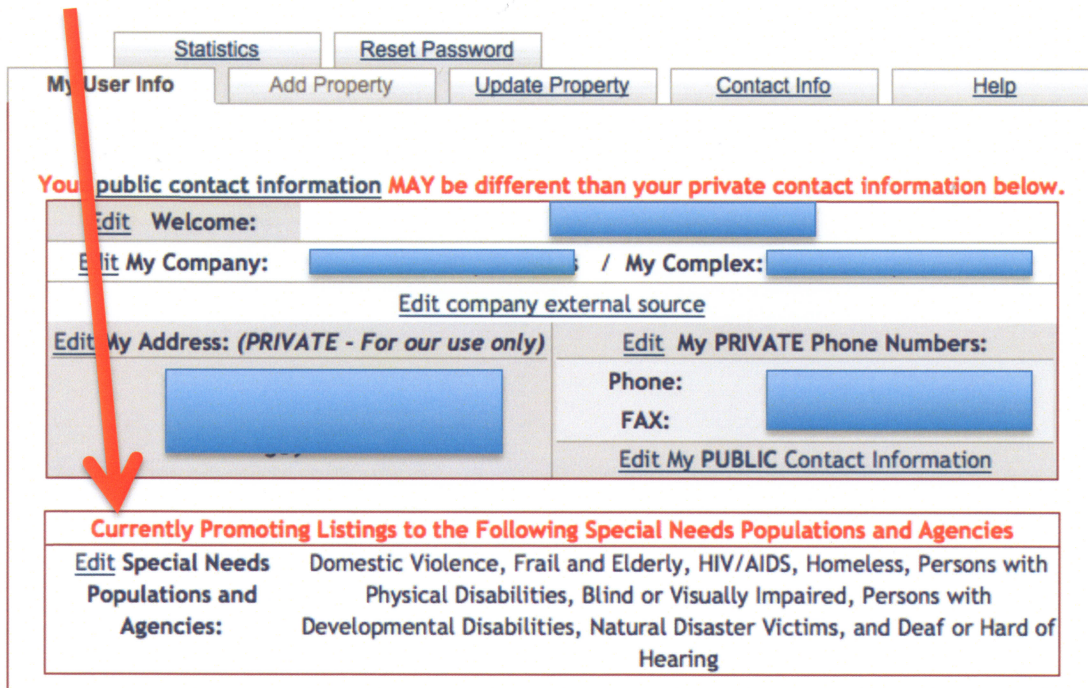
Info and Links

Login | English | Español | Select Language

Step Two: Choose **My User Info** tab after landlord has logged into account



Step Three: Choose **Edit Special Needs Populations and Agencies**



Step Four: Select **Mental Health Consumers** and click link at bottom of page

Special Needs Populations: (private)

Help Your Community - Your Rentals Can Make a Difference

Selecting box(es) below will connect you with local agencies that serve individuals and families who may be facing housing barriers. This information is NOT publicly displayed and will only be available to authorized case workers with special search access.

Although the Fair Housing Act applies to ALL prospective tenants, selecting these categories may help you lease units faster and offer rewarding opportunities to work with area programs and tenants.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blind or Visually Impaired | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Homeless | <input type="checkbox"/> Previous Evictions |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deaf or Hard of Hearing | <input type="checkbox"/> Homeowners Impacted By Foreclosure | <input type="checkbox"/> Refugees |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Consumers | <input type="checkbox"/> Shelter Plus Care [?] |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drug and/or Alcohol Recovery | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natural Disaster Victims | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsored Tenants [?] |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ex-Offenders | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Persons with Developmental Disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Students |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Frail and Elderly | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Persons with Physical Disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Transitional Age Youth [?] |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HIV/AIDS | | |

The below populations may search on their own and see your listings publicly

Veterans

All of the Above

Optional Information for Tenants or Home-owners: (public)

- What should a client bring for documentation? For Example:
 - Government issued photo I.D.
 - Pay stub, etc.
- Special Certifications (Ex: Realtor ®)
- General Company Description
- Special Requirements

We require Government issued ID, birth certificates and social security cards. We are an income based Section 8 property

(a few short sentences - no novels please)

[Click here to continue](#)