

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY HOMELESS ACTION PARTNERSHIP

New Chronically Homeless Definition

In December 2015, HUD published the Final Rules on the definition of “chronically homeless.”

Under the Final Rule, “chronically homeless” means:

- (1) A “homeless individual with a disability,” as defined in the Act, who:
 - Lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and
 - Has been homeless continuously for at least 12 months or on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years where the combined occasions must total at least 12 months
 - Occasions separated by a break of at least seven nights
 - Stays in institution of fewer than 90 days does not constitute a break
- (2) An individual who has been residing in an institutional care facility for fewer than 90 days and met all of the criteria in paragraph (1) of this definition, before entering that facility; or
- (3) A family with an adult head of household (or if there is no adult in the family, a minor head of household) who meets all of the criteria in paragraphs (1) or (2) of this definition, including a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless.

Summary of differences from previous definition:

1. Four occasions must total 12 months (they didn’t before)
2. Replaced “disabling condition” with “homeless individual with a disability”
3. “Occasion” is defined by a break of at least seven nights not residing in an emergency shelter, safe haven, or residing in a place meant for human habitation (there was no defined length of occasion before)
4. Stays in institution of fewer than 90 days do not constitute a break and count toward total time homeless (these stays used to be counted as a break)
5. New Recordkeeping Requirements under CoC Program (these are effective now for all programs – PSH, etc. – that are dedicated or prioritized for chronically homeless.

For further information, visit: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/4847/hearth-defining-chronically-homeless-final-rule/>