Office of Long-Term Living Online Training:

Nursing Home Transition (NHT) Housing

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# Welcome

Welcome to the Housing module of the Nursing Home Transition (NHT) online training series. This online training series is intended for NHT Coordinators, Supervisors, and Service Coordinators.

The purpose of this module is to provide an overview of housing barriers and resources.

## Resources Document

Various websites are mentioned throughout the training modules. To ensure that the links to these sites remain accurate, we have placed them in a separate document on this website.

Whenever a link is available in the resources document, the following bar will be displayed in the training module, usually at the bottom of your screen.

## Objectives

Please take a moment to read the objectives for this module.

* Describe the barriers to accessing housing
* Identify housing resources available for Nursing Home Transition (NHT)
* Describe the role of Regional Housing Coordinators (RHCs)
* Explain Tenant-based Rental Assistance (TBRA) and the role of the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) in TBRA
* Explain the 811 Project Rental Assistance (PRA) program
* List types of home adaptations and available funding sources
* Explain utilizing Home Maintenance Deductions

# Housing Barriers and Resources

Let’s begin this module by first taking a look at some of the barriers that prevent individuals from accessing housing as well as the resources for locating housing for NHT participants, including PA Housing Search.

## Barriers to Housing

When working with people on their transition out of a nursing facility, you may run into many barriers in trying to locate or secure housing for them. The following lists important information when assisting individuals to transition out of a nursing facility.

### General Barriers to Transition

Finding affordable and accessible housing may be a barrier to transition. Another barrier may be locating appropriate housing in a specific area the NHT participant wants to reside in because they want to be closer to conveniences, family and informal supports, medical care, transportation, and/or other services. In addition, housing may be affordable but not meet inspection standards.

Many times, there is a waiting list involved when working with the Housing Authority. In some areas of the state, it is very difficult to locate housing due to issues that are specific to the community, such as natural gas drilling in some parts of PA or a competitive housing market due to short-term rentals.

### Individual Backgrounds that Present Barriers

Once housing is located, you could encounter individuals who have backgrounds that present barriers to securing a home that meets their needs and preferences. For instance:

* Extraordinary medical expenses that wiped out their savings and left them in debt or with a poor credit history.
* Inability to keep up with the expenses of their previous home while staying in the nursing facility.
* A criminal record.
* Lost or misplaced personal identification or other important documents.

### Additional Barriers

Although in direct violation of established housing standards, including those of the Fair Housing Act, people may still face barriers due to their:

* Disability,
* Age,
* Race,
* National origin,
* Familial status,
* Sexual orientation,
* Gender identity, and/or
* Religion.

### Need for Home Adaptations

Another barrier to finding housing is the need for home adaptations. Some existing homes require adaptations, but the NHT participant may not have the funds to make these necessary alterations. There are options to access funding for home adaptations. These options will be explored later in the module.

## Locating Housing Resources

Finding affordable rental housing takes a bit of detective work, but as you gain experience, you will learn the best sources in your community. There are many resources available to assist you in locating affordable housing for NHT participants, including:

* Landlord associations;
* Rental agents;
* Regional Housing Coordinators (RHCs);
* Public Housing Authority’s Landlord List;
* Newspaper listings, circulars, and internet;
* For Rent signs;
* Social Service agencies;
* Word of mouth; and
* PAHousingSearch.com.

## PA Housing Search

NHT participants who need a new residence are frequently referred to PAHousingSearch.com. This resource provides access to information about affordable rental housing opportunities throughout Pennsylvania. Although this information is frequently updated, Service Coordinators (SCs) or NHT Coordinators (NHTCs) should still confirm availability of rental units with the landlord or property manager.

## PA Housing Search FAQs

Although PA Housing Search includes both market-rate rental housing and subsidized rental units, the results reflect the information entered into it by landlords or property managers. Results should not be assumed to encompass all affordable housing options in a search region. As a result, some regions may yield more matches on the platform than others.

Take a moment to review these frequently asked questions about PA Housing Search.

### How are searches organized?

PA Housing Search allows you to search by city, county, or zip code for rental housing.

### What information does PA Housing Search include about the rental unit?

It includes such information as address, management contact information, unit size, rent, and availability.

### What information is provided about the unit’s accessibility features?

PA Housing Search provides information about the unit’s accessibility features, such as entrance ways, living areas, and bathroom features. Search results can be filtered based on accessibility features.

### What other information is provided?

PA Housing Search provides photos of many of the listings, a location map, and information about nearby amenities like parks, schools, and hospitals.

### Additional Information

Additional information on PA Housing Search is available in the Resources Document.

## Housing Barriers and Resources Review Activity

Now, check your understanding by answering these review questions.

1. Which of the following can be barriers to locating and securing housing for NHT participants? (Select all that apply.)
* Poor credit history
* Lack of affordable housing
* Discrimination based on age
* Lost or misplaced personal identification
* NHT participant wishes to reside in a specific area

Please pause.

The correct answer is that all of these apply. Many barriers to housing exist, including poor credit history, lack of affordable housing, discrimination based on age, lost or misplaced personal identification, and the NHT participant wishing to reside in a specific location.

1. Which of the following is NOT a housing resource for NHT?
* PAHousingSearch.com
* Public Housing Authority’s Landlord List
* Front Door Information System
* Social Service agencies

Please pause.

The correct answer is the Front Door Information System is not a housing resource for NHT. PAHousingSearch.com, the Public Housing Authority Landlord List, and Social Service agencies are commonly used NHT housing resources.

# Self-Determination Housing of Pennsylvania (SDHP)

In this next section, we will take a look at Self-Determination Housing of Pennsylvania (SDHP), the RHC Program, and the Prepared Renter Education Program (PREP).

## SDHP Overview

SDHP advocates for accessible, affordable, and integrated housing opportunities for individuals with disabilities and older adults.

SDHP also works closely with partnering organizations, government institutions, and other entities to promote effective public policies and inclusive regulatory rules in accessible housing on behalf of individuals with disabilities.

SDHP is the waiting list administrator for the 811 Project Rental Assistance Program. Its team manages all waiting list and outreach responsibilities for this statewide housing option for individuals with disabilities.

## The Role of the RHC

Take a moment to read about the RHC roles and responsibilities.

### Role of RHC

SDHP’s team of RHCs partner with community stakeholders to provide technical assistance and deliver trainings to increase choice and affordability in housing for people with disabilities and older adults.

RHCs can help SCs and NHTCs understand how to locate affordable accessible housing and overcome common barriers preventing access to housing. They also can look at complicated housing issues and offer possible solutions.

### Education

RHCs educate program administrators, NHT staff, and service providers to assist them with identifying housing resources in their region for older adults and individuals with disabilities. They also provide training for landlords and property managers to increase their knowledge of housing systems and services within their communities.

For easy navigation, the RHC program broke up the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania into two distinct regions: East and West.

### Training

RHCs facilitate training sessions and provide technical assistance to groups and agencies about available resources, housing system processes, and the housing needs of older adults and individuals with disabilities. The RHC training library includes well over a dozen topics. All webinars are free, and registrations can be accessed through their website. RHCs can also be contacted to provide personalized trainings to your agency.

### Point of Contact

RHCs serve as a single point of contact for SCs and NHTCs to obtain technical assistance information related to housing and services for older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Please note that SDHP provides organization-level support as opposed to direct client-level support.

You can submit an inquiry or access your RHC by submitting an Information and Referral request on the SDHP Website. The link for the SDHP website can be found in the NHT Resources document.

## PREP Training: An Overview

One of the key training programs conducted by an RHC is the Prepared Renter Education Program (PREP), a train-the-trainer program that is specifically designed to help people with disabilities become successful tenants.

Take a moment to read about PREP.

### About PREP

PREP is a collaborative effort between the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) and SDHP. The program was designed to provide individuals with the tools they need to become successful renters.

### PREP Training

PREP starts with the basics of renting such as determining how much the tenant can afford to spend on their housing and what to look for in an apartment.

Then, it describes the process of applying for housing, including gathering the information needed to submit a rental application.

Next, it provides information about the lease, the rights and responsibilities of the tenant and landlord, and strategies to address barriers such as poor credit or a criminal record.

### PREP Training Topics

PREP training focuses on topics that renters need to think about before they start looking for housing. It helps them anticipate the challenges they might face based on their personal circumstances.

PREP training topics may include:

* Renting Fundamentals
* Preparing to Rent
* Understanding Your Personal History
* Fair Housing
* Creating Your PREP Folder
* Locating Housing
* Understanding a Lease
* Maintaining Housing
* Being a Part of the Neighborhood
* Working with Your Landlord
* Stretching a Budget
* Dealing with Eviction

The training also includes tips on being a successful tenant once housing is obtained.

### Participation in PREP

SDHP’s objective is to deliver PREP to SCs and NHTCs in the hopes that it will be supported, customized, and delivered to communities across the Commonwealth. RHCs will guide SCs and NHTCs and help prepare them for implementation in the community. Participating in PREP training is free and will help SCs and NHTCs acquire the knowledge and skills needed to provide guidance to individuals transitioning to the community.

## Regional Housing Coordinators Review Activity

1. True or False? RHCs offer technical assistance for PREP at a nominal fee to SCs and NHTCs.

Please pause.

The correct answer is False. RHCs offer technical assistance for PREP at no cost to SCs and NHTCs.

1. True or False? One role of the RHC is to facilitate access to housing options and opportunities for older adults and people with disabilities.

Please pause.

The correct answer is True. One role of the RHC is to work with SCs and NHTCs to facilitate access to housing options and opportunities for the older adults and people with disabilities who they serve. They provide outreach by developing collaborative relationships with groups and agencies in their region that have contact with individuals with disabilities.

# NHT Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (NHT TBRA) and 811 Project Rental Assistance (PRA)

In this next section, we will take a look at NHT Tenant Based Rental Assistance (NHT TBRA) and 811 Project Rental Assistance (PRA) and the role that the PHFA plays in both. In addition, we will more closely examine the NHT TBRA and 811 PRA application processes and eligibility requirements.

## The Role of PHFA in TBRA

To make the Commonwealth a better place to live while fostering community and economic development, PHFA provides the capital for decent, safe, and affordable homes.

PHFA has partnered with the Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) to create a program for temporary rental assistance for income-eligible people transitioning out of nursing facilities.

## NHT TBRA Overview

NHT TBRA is a statewide program designed to assist with securing housing in situations where an individual’s income is not immediately available to them due to their nursing facility stay. NHT TBRA can provide funding for rent to secure and hold an apartment for a limited time as the individual is transitioning and going through the process of having their income restored. NHT TBRA is used by a household to rent the housing of their choice.

## NHT TBRA

NHTCs work directly with PHFA (not the Housing Authority) on the NHT TBRA Requests. The NHTC fills out the NHT TBRA Payment Request Form, ACH Form, and W-9 form and sends them to PHFA. The TBRA Request Form is then sent to DHS/OLTL to be approved. Once approved by DHS/OLTL, they are then returned to PHFA with approval for payment. PHFA pays the NHT agency, and the NHT agency then pays the landlord. NHT TBRA is only meant as a limited resource to help in specific transition circumstances, and each month of rent requested through NHT TBRA is treated as a separate request, requiring a separate payment request and approval.

## NHT TBRA Example

Here's one example of how this process could look. Mrs. M signed her lease on November 1. Due to the extended enrollment process and home adaptations that need to be completed, Mrs. M will not be able to move in until the end of December. The nursing facility is receiving most of her check. She will not receive her full Social Security check in enough time to pay December’s rent. NHT TBRA funding could assist Mrs. M with her situation by providing funding to pay her rent until she begins receiving her social security.

## 811 PRA Overview

The Section 811 Project Rental Assistance (PRA) program is a collaboration between PHFA and DHS to provide affordable, integrated, and accessible housing to households at or below 30% of area median income which include an adult with a disability.

This program provides a project-based rent assistance subsidy to eligible individuals residing in a designated 811 PRA unit—the rental subsidy is tied to the unit and not the individual. 811 PRA tenants can expect to pay 30% of their adjusted income towards the rent and the subsidy will pay the difference between their portion and the contract rent.

## 811 PRA Eligibility

SDHP serves as the waiting list administrator for the 811 PRA program. SDHP and their stakeholder network will conduct outreach, identify potential applicants, screen for waiting list eligibility, and add individuals to the program waiting list. SDHP will refer individuals from the waiting list to available units at which point the individual would apply to the property and be screened according to the property’s tenant selection criteria including criminal, credit, and housing history background checks.

For more information on 811 PRA eligibility, please refer to the Resources document.

Take a moment to read the 811 PRA eligibility requirements.

* At least one person in the household must be non-elderly (age 18 to 61), disabled, and receiving or eligible to receive Medicaid LTSS.
* The gross household income must be at or below 30% Area Median Income (AMI).

## The Role of the RHC

The 811 PRA program was developed to primarily assist adults with Autism, intellectual and physical disabilities, and/or serious mental illnesses and transitional age youth with disabilities. These groups are prioritized based on the setting in which the applicant currently lives.

Take a moment to read about these priorities.

### Priority 1

Priority 1: Individuals are institutionalized but able to live in the community. This includes, but is not limited to, individuals residing in:

* Private and public psychiatric hospitals.
* Nursing facilities.
* Facilities for those with intellectual disabilities.

### Priority 2

Priority 2: Individuals are at risk of institutionalization. This includes, but is not limited to:

* People who are living with caregivers in unstable situations.
* Those experiencing homelessness (includes couch surfing and doubled up).
* People aging out of the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program with no family supports.
* Individuals aging out of foster care.

### Priority 3

Priority 3: Individuals are in congregate care settings and desire to live in the community. This includes, but is not limited to, persons in:

* Community residential rehabilitation facilities.
* Long-term structured residences.
* Personal care homes.
* Domiciliary care.

## 811 PRA-Eligible Properties

An eligible multifamily property can be any new or existing property funded with the federal HOME Investment Partnerships Program and/or Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program with at least five housing units. Units must meet the program criteria for integration, accessibility, and access to transportation and services. Eligible properties contract with PHFA for a specific number of units of varying sizes to be designated for the 811 PRA program.

## NHT TBRA and 811 PRA Review Activity

Now, check your understanding by answering these review questions.

1. True or False? PHFA has partnered with the Department of Emergency Management to create a temporary rent subsidy for people who are income eligible and transitioning out of nursing facilities.

Please pause.

The correct answer is False. PHFA has partnered with OLTL to create a temporary rent subsidy for people who are income eligible and transitioning out of nursing facilities.

1. True or False. The NHT Coordinator completes the NHT TBRA Requests.

Please pause.

The correct answer is True. The NHT Coordinator completes the NHT TBRA Requests.

1. True or False? The household income must be at or below 30% of the Area Median Income to qualify for 811 PRA.

Please pause.

The correct answer is True. The household income must be at or below 30% Area Median Income. Additionally, the household must include an adult with a disability.

# Home Adaptations

In this next section, we will take a look at types of home adaptations that may need to be made and various sources of funding that can be used to cover the cost of these adaptations.

## Types of Home Adaptations

In some cases, NHT participants may have housing that does not meet their current needs. For instance, if an individual has a mobility disability, their home may not have wide enough doorways or an accessible entrance.

There are many adaptations, which include reasonable modifications, that can be done to existing structures, such as homes or apartments, to make them safe and functional, such as installing a ramp or stair glide or widening doorways.

Home adaptations can range from involved projects that require outside funding, like adjusting the height of counters and sinks in the bathroom or kitchen, to simple adaptations to existing features, such as changing knobs to handles that are easier to grip.

## Funding Sources

There are options to access funding for home adaptations if an individual does not have the necessary funds.

Take a moment to read about some of these options.

### Landlords

If an individual rents their housing, they may request a reasonable modification from their landlord.

### Pennsylvania State Plan

For individuals receiving Medicaid benefits, the Pennsylvania Medicaid State Plan would cover certain adaptations. Home accessibility durable medical equipment (DME) must be related to the individual accessing their home.

### HCBS

If the individual is eligible, funds from a Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) program could cover home adaptation costs at an existing residence.

### Low-Interest Loans

Another option is that individuals may apply for a low-interest loan through the PHFA, the PA Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF), or the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

### Additional Sources

Assistance may also be available through the Veterans Administration, or other programs such as Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP), OPTIONS, Special Nursing Home Transition Funds (SNHTF), or SDHP. Other options may be available in your area.

## HCBS Funding

The Medicaid HCBS program provides funding for services that assist eligible individuals to live in the community.

Individuals who qualify for HCBS receive services in their home or in other community-based settings in order to help them live independently in the community. Services may include covering the cost of home adaptations.

## Family Caregiver Support Program

FCSP provides assistance to family and friends caring for a loved one, 60 years of age and older, who help with daily activities such as meal preparation, light housekeeping, grooming, and personal care. Qualifying caregivers may receive assistance for home adaptations and assistive devices.

## Home Adaptations Review Activity

Now, check your understanding by answering these review questions.

1. Which of the following are examples of home adaptations? (Select all that apply.)
* Installing a ramp
* Obtaining a hospital bed
* Widening doorways
* Replacing doorknobs with handles

Please pause.

There are many adaptations that can be done to an existing home or apartment to make it safe and functional, such as installing a ramp, widening doorways, and replacing doorknobs with handles that are easier to grip. A hospital bed is durable medical equipment and does not qualify as a home adaptation.

1. True or False. If an individual is ineligible for HCBS programs, they will not be able to access any funding for home adaptations.

Please pause.

The correct answer is False. Individuals who are ineligible for HCBS programs may still apply for other programs, such as through PHFA, the PA Assistive Technology Foundation, or the USDA.

# Home Maintenance Deduction

In the final section, we will take a look at the Home Maintenance Deduction, suggested uses, and application instructions.

## Home Maintenance Deduction Overview

Individuals who are admitted to a nursing facility can apply for the Home Maintenance Deduction to allow them to maintain their existing community housing, secure new housing, or pay for transition expenses. It may be necessary to have the MA-51 Form changed from “Long-Term” to “Short-Term” in order to qualify for the home maintenance deduction.

Please note that Supplemental Security Income (SSI)-eligible individuals do not qualify for the Home Maintenance Deduction.

## Applying for the Home Maintenance Deduction

So, how does someone apply for the Home Maintenance Deduction?

Individuals who will be realistically discharged from a nursing facility within 6 months, unless SSI eligible, can apply for the Home Maintenance Deduction. The Home Maintenance Deduction can be granted more than once as it renews with new nursing facility admissions from the community.

Home Maintenance Deductions are approved by County Assistance Offices (CAOs). If a CAO approves an individual for the Home Maintenance Deduction, that individual can keep a portion of their income to maintain or establish housing or pay for other bills or services that may be helpful toward the individual’s goal of discharge into the community.

A new MA-51 must be completed as part of the process if the person is noted as long-term. The physician must fill out the form stating that the individual is nursing facility clinically eligible, short-term, and will be discharged within 180 days. A nursing facility social worker or admission coordinator can help the NHT participant with the Home Maintenance Deduction application process.

## Suggested Uses

If approved for a Home Maintenance Deduction by the CAO, an NHT participant may use their Home Maintenance Deduction for many purposes, including the following:

* Saving up for the first month’s rent in an apartment;
* Saving up to pay cash up front to turn utilities back on;
* Paying fees to secure needed forms of identification that may have been lost;
* Paying off back utility bills or debts, such as outstanding medical expenses that may prevent a successful transition; or
* Purchasing any items necessary to maintain or establish a home and set up a household.

## Home Maintenance Review Activity

Now, check your understanding by answering these review questions.

1. True or False. To qualify for the Home Maintenance Deduction, a new MA-51 must be completed and marked as long term.

Please pause.

The correct answer is False. If the individual is noted as long term, in order to qualify for the Home Maintenance Deduction, a new MA-51 must be completed and marked as short term.

1. True or False. The Home Maintenance Deduction can only be granted once to each individual.

Please pause.

The correct answer is False. The Home Maintenance Deduction can be granted more than once as it renews with new nursing facility admissions from the community.

1. True or False. If approved for a Home Maintenance Deduction by the CAO, an NHT participant may use the Home Maintenance Deduction to purchase any items necessary to set up a household.

Please pause.

The correct answer is True. When approved for a Home Maintenance Deduction by the CAO, an NHT participant may use the Home Maintenance Deduction to purchase any items necessary to secure, set up, and maintain a household.

## Housing Summary

In this module, we explored:

* The barriers to accessing housing,
* Housing resources that are available for Nursing Home Transition (NHT),
* The role of Regional Housing Coordinators (RHCs),
* Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) and the general role of the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency in TBRA,
* 811 Project Rental Assistance (PRA),
* Home adaptation funding types and sources, and
* How to utilize the home maintenance deduction.

## Congratulations!

Congratulations! You have completed the Nursing Home Transition Housing training.

If you have read everything in this document, you may go to [this website](https://oltl.deringconsulting.com/nht-module3/) to register completion of this training.