

# WAITLIST OPENING FOR PROJECT BASED VOUCHERS FOR STUDIO UNITS AT THE COMMONS ON MLK



## The Commons on MLK FAQs

The Commons on MLK is a Permanent Supportive Housing program with 51 unit studio apartment for people experiencing chronic homelessness. It is located at 2315 MLK Jr Blvd next door to Lane County Behavioral Health. There will be on-site property management and supportive services.

### 1) What are the eligibility criteria?

- Currently living in an emergency shelter, outdoors, in a car, or other homeless situation
- Household gross income is at or below 50% Area Median Income
- No one in the household is registered as a life-time sex offender
- No one in the household has a record of manufacturing methamphetamine in a federally subsidized unit

While these are minimum criteria to be considered for housing at The Commons on MLK, this program uses the Coordinated Entry System to prioritize the available resources. **Please see FAQ #2 on priority preference and the FAQ #13 on Coordinated Entry for more information.**

### 2) Who will get priority preference for The Commons on MLK?

- Chronically homeless individuals: This includes people who are currently homeless and have been homeless for 12 or more months in the last three years AND have a disabling condition. A disabling condition is any type of condition or disability that is expected to be long term and that could make it harder to find housing. It does not require that someone has been found eligible for social security disability or supplemental security income (SSDI or SSI)
- Those who participate in the FUSE program or who are high utilizers of crisis systems such as the jail and hospital emergency room.

### 3) How are the preferences in compliance with Federal and Oregon Fair Housing laws?

- The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program Interim Rule allows The Commons on MLK project to prioritize housing and services to subpopulations of homeless persons who need specialized supportive services. The Commons on MLK will provide services specifically to chronically homeless individuals who may have substance use disorders and/or mental health conditions that make it harder for them to live independently.

### 4) What are the income limits for The Commons on MLK and does my income need to be below the limit when I am added to the wait list or when I am referred to a housing program?

The income limits for The Commons on MLK is at or below 50% Area Median Income.

**2020 INCOME LIMITS:**    **1 Person**    **2 Persons**  
**\$24,500**            **\$28,000**

Information on your income will be collected when you are added to the wait list, and again when you are referred to a housing program. Your income must be below the limit at both times.

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## 5) What if I have no income? Can I still apply?

Yes, you can still apply for this program.

## 6) How many occupants can live in a unit?

The standard occupancy is 1 person per unit and a maximum occupancy of 2 persons.

## 7) How much is the rent?

Rent is calculated to be 30% of a household's gross income. Utilities are included.

## 8) What type of services will be available on-site?

Quantum will be the on-site 24/7 property management agency to assist with rent collection and regular property maintenance.

ShelterCare will provide support services to tenants to help them to stay in housing and achieve their goals related to self-sufficiency. Services include behavioral health support, ongoing case management, peer support, and connection to community resources.

## 9) How do I apply for The Commons on MLK Permanent Supportive Housing program?

The Commons on MLK participates in Lane County Coordinated Entry System. You must currently be living in an emergency shelter, outdoors, in your car, or other homeless situation to be considered for this housing opportunity. If you meet these criteria, please contact 541-682-4663 to schedule a Front Door Assessment. Unlike most property rentals, with the exception of being registered as a life-time sex offender or having a record of manufacturing methamphetamine in a federally subsidized unit, poor credit, criminal history, or low income do not negatively impact your ability to live here.

While these are minimum criteria to be considered for housing at The Commons on MLK, this program uses the Coordinated Entry System to prioritize the available resources. **Please see FAQ #2 on priority preference and the FAQ #13 on Coordinated Entry for more information.**

## 10) Do I need to be homeless to be eligible?

Yes, all individuals referred to the Commons at MLK must meet the federal definition of homelessness when they are referred. This definition includes people who lack a fixed, regular, adequate nighttime residence. People sleeping in places not meant for human habitation or emergency shelters are considered homeless. This includes people who are staying at an emergency shelter, alternative shelter (such as over-night parking or Dusk to Dawn) or are sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (such as parks, streets, cars, trailers without access to water and electricity, bridges). People who are chronically homeless, meaning that they have been homeless for more than 12 months in the last three years and have a long-term disability that makes it difficult to keep housing and/or employment will be prioritized.

## 11) I don't have my own home, but I'm living with friends or family. Am I eligible for The Commons on MLK?

No, people in "doubled up" or "couch surfing" living situations do not meet the homeless eligibility criteria.

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## 12) What does it mean to be chronically homeless?

Chronically homeless refers to a situation where a person is experiencing long-term homelessness (more than 12 months over the past three years) and also has a long-term disability that makes it difficult to maintain or keep housing and/or employment.

## 13) How does Coordinated Entry work with The Commons on MLK Permanent Supportive Housing program?

The Commons on MLK is part of Lane County's Coordinated Entry system, Coordinated Entry is a standard process that is the "Front Door" for connecting people experiencing homelessness to available housing and ongoing support to stay housed. People are matched with a housing program based on their need and level of vulnerability. Not everyone who completes a Front Door Assessment will be matched with a housing program The goal of Coordinated Entry is to make homelessness a rare, brief, and one-time occurrence.

### These are the important steps in Coordinated Entry.

- 1. Schedule a Front Door Assessment.** If you are living in an emergency shelter, outdoors, in your car, or other homeless situation, then contact 541-682-4663 to schedule a Front Door Assessment.
- 2. Complete a Front Door Assessment.** A skilled assessor will complete a Front Door Assessment with you and will ask a series of questions about you and your household, your housing situation, your health, and what needs you may have. This Front Door Assessment is valid for 6 months.
- 3. Placement on the Central Wait List.** After you have completed a Front Door Assessment, you will be placed on the Central Wait List. The Central Wait List is a prioritized list of households needing housing. It is ranked by a scale of vulnerability based on various criteria which was collected during the Front Door Assessment (including past housing and homeless history, barriers you may face to get in housing, your health, and other needs). This list is not first come first served. Lane County prioritizes chronically homeless households for all programs that pull referrals from the Central Wait List.
- 4. Getting Matched with a Housing Program.** When there is a vacancy with The Commons on MLK or other housing program, the housing program contacts Lane County Coordinated Entry staff. County staff will review the Central Wait List and match a client to the vacancy. A housing program case manager will contact the client when they have been referred to a housing program.

## 14) What happens during the Front Door Assessment?

A skilled assessor will contact you by phone at your scheduled appointment time. The skilled assessor will ask you a standard set of questions, to get more information about your current and past housing and homeless history, barriers you may face to get in housing, your health, and other needs. Everyone who applies is asked the same questions, even if they may not seem relevant to your situation. On average, the Front Door Assessment takes approximately 30 minutes to complete, but the time can vary.

## 15) Are all Front Door Assessments completed over the phone?

Yes, currently Front Door Assessments are conducted via phone only until further notice. The goal is to support community wide physical distancing measures to minimize the spread of COVID-19.



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## 16) Are Front Door Assessments available in other languages?

Yes, interpreters are available upon request. Please let the scheduler know if you need a Front Door Assessment in another language or if you need another accommodation.

## 17) I've already completed a Front Door Assessment. Do I need to do it again?

A Front Door Assessment is valid for 6 months. If your assessment has been completed within the last 6 months, then you do not need to do it again until it expires. If you completed a Front Door Assessment within the last 6 months you will automatically be considered for the Commons on MLK. If your front door assessment has expired, you may need to schedule a new assessment, contact 541-682-4663 to check the status of your assessment.

## 18) I completed a Coordinated Entry "Front Door Assessment" but my situation has changed. What should I do?

If you want to update your contact information or any other information related to your housing screening, you can contact 541-682-4663. If it has been more than 6 months since your last Front Door Assessment, you may need to complete a new one.

## 19) If I'm not matched with The Commons on MLK, will I be considered for other housing opportunities?

There are other programs that participate in Lane County's Coordinated Entry System. If you are placed on the Central Wait List, you may be considered for these other programs. It is important to note that the Central Wait List does not include all housing resources in the community, so we encourage you to explore other housing opportunities.

## 20) How is my confidential information in the Front Door Assessment protected?

Front Door Assessments are entered into Wellsky Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Your information is visible to a limited number of Lane County social service providers and protected using highest standards. For more information on HMIS privacy policies and procedures, please visit [www.lanecounty.org/hmis](http://www.lanecounty.org/hmis)

## 21) How likely is it that I'll be selected for the Commons on MLK?

The goal is to house people as quickly as possible, but the time can vary based on a number of factors. It is possible that you get on the Coordinated Entry Central Wait list and may not get served. Typically, there are over 200 people on the Central Waitlist who are in need of housing. This waitlist is NOT a first-come first-served, but instead it is prioritizes people based on need and other factors.

## 22) If I am selected, what happens next?

A case manager with ShelterCare will contact you if you are selected for the Commons on MLK. They will guide you through the process and work with you and multiple agencies that are involved in the program. This includes Homes for Good and Quantum Property Management.

## 23) When does the waitlist close?

The waitlist is ongoing. Coordinated Entry's Central Waitlist is structured differently than other wait lists and is evaluated continuously and prioritized by people's vulnerability and needs. It is not a first-come first-served.

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## 24) Are pets allowed at the Commons on MLK?

Pets are not allowed at the Commons on MLK, however, assistance and companion animals will be permitted with an approved Reasonable Accommodation Request.

## 25) What if I already have a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher?

If you already have a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher, you are still able to schedule a front door assessment. However, if you are currently housed with that Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher, you would not meet the eligibility criteria of being homeless and would not be eligible. If you are not currently housed with your Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher, you can schedule a front door assessment, and once your front door assessment is complete, if you are placed on the coordinated entry, you can be referred to the project. If you receive a Project Based Voucher for the Commons on MLK, you would forfeit your Housing Choice to take the Project Based Voucher. After living at the Commons on MLK for a year, you are eligible to apply to transfer back to a Housing Choice Voucher and move to a rental on the open market, if you choose or continue to live at the Commons on MLK.

## 26) Do I have to be Homeless in Lane County?

Yes. If you are homeless outside of Lane County, the front door assessor will try to connect you to the Coordinated Entry contact in the county in which you reside.

## 27) Can I live in the Commons on MLK indefinitely?

There are no time restrictions for the Commons on MLK. This project, being Permanent Supportive Housing, is meant to be a permanent solution to housing. Someone can utilize their Project Based Voucher at the Commons on MLK as long as they are income eligible. The case management services through ShelterCare are meant to help tenants become more self-sufficient and give them the tools they need to find other housing solutions if they wish. After living at the Commons on MLK for one year, tenants are able to convert their Project Based Voucher into a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher and find housing on the open rental market if they choose.

## 28) What happens if my income increases while living at the Commons on MLK and exceeds the 50% income eligibility?

If your income has increased enough that you no longer require a Housing Assistance Payment as 30% of your income is equal to or more than the full rent amount, you will continue as a Project Based Voucher participant for 6 months. After the 6 month period, your unit will no longer qualify for a Project Based Voucher subsidy. You will still be eligible to reside in the unit for as long as you choose, however, you will be required to pay full rent during this time.