

# **Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset**

## **Healing Homes Initiative**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **What is Healing Homes?**

RWJUHS Healing Homes is a 24-month transitional housing initiative that assist people who are experiencing financial hardship due to a medical condition that has caused homelessness. RWJUHS Healing Homes assist individual or families to manage their health, finances and work with them to find and obtain stable housing within 24 months. Qualified applicants can stay up to no more than 24 months rent-free in one of our two (2) newly renovated two bedroom furnished homes located in Somerville. Each home can only accommodate a household size one to no more than four. Participants are responsible for the purchasing and preparing all food and other living expenses.

#### **What support services are offered to Healing Homes participants?**

A social worker will assess each individual participant and work with the individual or family to develop an individualized action plan. The supportive services provided will facilitate movement towards self-sufficiency. Healing Homes offers the following services:

- Case Management
- Financial Coach (assist with budgeting, money management, etc.)
- Savings Match Program
- Referral to community resources and service providers

#### **Who may be eligible for Healing Homes?**

To qualify you must be a resident of Somerset County and must meet certain initiative eligibility criteria.

#### **What are the criteria for participation?**

##### **Applicants must meet all of the following criteria for Initiative consideration:**

- Applicant must be employed with steady income
- Has an medical condition that has contributed to financial hardship
- Earn below the NJ HUD income guidelines
- Demonstrates inability to afford housing and/or basic cost of living
- Has limited access to health care
- Demonstrates a willingness to improve their circumstances
- Preference will be given to applicants residing in the towns in New Jersey identified below with a median household income below the county average:
  - Bound Brook
  - Franklin
  - Manville
  - North Plainfield

- Somerville
- South Bound Brook

**What are the income guidelines for eligible applicants?**

The then current NJ HUD income guidelines, for example, the 2021 guidelines are:

- 1 Person – Earns less than \$57,250 per year
- 2 People – Combined income is less than \$65,400 per year
- 3 People – Combined income is less than \$73,600 per year
- 4 people – Combined income is less than \$81,750 per year
- 5 people – Combined income is less than \$88,300 per year
- 6 people – Combined income is less than \$94,850 per year

**How long may I remain in the home?**

Individuals and/or families may occupy the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset residential home for no more than twenty-four (24) months subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the Healing Homes Participant Agreement.

**Am I a tenant?**

No. This is not a tenancy. You may be removed at any time if you are not actively participating in the Initiative or not following the rules and guideline of the initiative.

**Will you do a credit check and background check?**

Yes. All applicants will be required to provide their credit report with credit score and consent to a background check.

**Am I required to have a job?**

Yes. Applicants must be employed with steady income upon entering the Initiative and throughout the duration of the Initiative.

**Will I have to save my money?**

Yes. You are required to have a savings account to which you will be required to deposit funds monthly, based on your household income and your expenses and authorize us to confirm with the financial institution.

**Is smoking allowed in the home or on the premises?**

No.

**Will I have to do a drug test?**

Yes, you will be required to do a drug test upon entry and subject to random drug testing.

## **What are some of the requirements/expectations for approved participants?**

Program participants must:

- Sign Healing Homes Participation Agreement.
- Remain employed throughout stay in the home with steady income which covers monthly expenses
- Meet with case manager once a week and accept case management and or any other services deemed necessary to live independently at the end of the program
- Meet with a financial coach to develop a monthly household budget and savings plan
- Have a positive cash flow in checking account on a monthly basis
- Deposit thirty percent (30%) of monthly income into a housing savings account with Affinity FCU and not withdraw any money from this account
- Must share financials monthly with RWJS and financial coach
- Apply for the Central Jersey Housing Resource Center Savings and/or Affinity Credit Union Match Program
- Complete a financial management course and financial counseling within three months of enrollment in the program
- Must keep the house clean

## **How do I apply?**

Applications for Healing Homes are available on Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset's Web site at [www.rwjbh.org/somersethealinghomes](http://www.rwjbh.org/somersethealinghomes) or you may call the hospital's Community Health Department at 908-685-2814 to request that an application be mailed to you.

## **What are some of the required documents needed to apply?**

Please look at the application. Here are some of the required documents:

- Social Security numbers for all members of the household
- Signed copies of the most current filed Federal (1040) Income Tax Returns for all household members
- Copies of the four (4) most recent pay stubs for all household members
- Documentation of other sources of income for all household members, including Social Security payments and child support
- Documentation of your medical condition, functional limitations if any and verification of medications from your medical doctor.
- Documentation of disability status or care provider status for nonworking adults
- Documentation of child care expenses for children under the age of 12
- Documentation for any household member who is exempt from filing Federal and State Income Tax Returns, including a W-2 Form and a letter from the IRS stating exemption
- Checking account statements for previous 2 months

- Personal statement describing why you are applying for participation, your understanding of what will be required of you and what strengths you have that will make you successful

**Is my application confidential?**

Yes. It will only be shared with the hospital staff and those on the Healing Homes task force who review the applications for participation. All information you provide on the Healing Homes applications will be confidential.

**What if I do not know the answer to a question/ request?**

Please be completely honest when filling out the application and providing any supporting documents. Applications with falsified information will be denied.

**Am I guaranteed approval of my application?**

No. Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset maintains sole discretion to accept or deny your application, stop accepting applications, or discontinue this initiative, at any time.

**\*\* Applications with falsified information will be denied. If you falsify an application and we learn after enrollment, that is cause for dismissal from Healing Homes Transitional Housing Initiative.**

**Who can I contact with questions about my application?**

Please contact Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset's Community Health Department at 908-685-2814.