

Transcript: Interview with DC Resident

- [Jie] Ready. Will you please state your name?

- [Milton] Milton Mars-Goddard.

- [Jie] Okay, would you mind telling us a little bit about yourself?

- [Milton] Well, I mean, I became disabled about four years ago. I was working, and walking, and everything, then all of a sudden, well, the doctor never told me I was a diabetic, and still to this day, I mean, I wasn't treated, what happened, I lost both of my legs above the knee, to make a long story short. And, they never told me that I was a diabetic. So, to this day, I never still know if I was a diabetic, but, what happened, I bought a pair of Timberland boots from the flea market. I mean, learn it from me, don't never wear no shoes from nobody else. And then I didn't clean 'em properly, right? And I wore those boots, and I was working at the time, so I was working hard and I felt something burning to me on the bottom, I mean, on the side of my foot. So, a sore came on there about the size of a quarter, and at the time I didn't have no insurance. At that time, so how it went, did not afford it. So the sore got real big, as the size of a cell phone, and it wouldn't heal. So the doctor, they would say, I have four major surgeries to my foot hole. Then I fell down, busted stitches, then I went back to late. Then it came above my knee. And then a year later, the same thing happened to my other leg. Sore came on my foot, they took it off. Then it came above my knee. So I like four, major surgeries and I do what everybody else do. I mean, the only thing, I just can't walk. I tried a prosthetic, but it hurt to stand up in 'em like, so, I left that alone. So I'm just, I've got a mobile wheelchair. I got the manual wheelchair also. So I do everything, what everybody else do, except walk. I'll just can't walk. So, I mean, that's mine. That's how I'm living from day to day.

- [Jie] Okay. Thank you for sharing that with us. Want to learn a little bit about your experience as a Mainstream voucher holder? How did you learn about the voucher program?

- [Milton] Oh, when I was young, back in 90'. I was basically trying to find an apartment and somebody told me about housing. Still, I mean, back then, I didn't realize when I signed up for the program that it was about the voucher. I thought it was just some people that help you try to find an apartment. Come to find out, well, I was on my job 20 years after I signed up with housing. And that was back in about 96', but I worked all that time, so I didn't need housing at that point. 'Cause I was working full time for like 20 years on my job. And then four years later I lost both of my legs above my knee. And then soon as I lost my leg, my wife kicked me to the curb after being married for 20 years. I guess she didn't wanna be with me, by me losing my leg. Right? So, I mean, it's a fast go, man. Because when we got married, it was supposed to have been for better, for worse. But when I lost my leg, man, I lost her. So God made me a little bit more better off, 'cause he gave me my own apartment now, and I ain't gotta worry about her, you know, putting me out and stuff. No more kicking me to the curb.

- [Jie] So when did you get?

- [Milton] That's where I'm at.

- [Jie] When did you get your apartment?

- [Milton] January the 31st, 2020.

- Okay. Okay. Can you talk about what what was it like previously, before you got the apartment?

- [Milton] Well, I was in a shelter. My wife put me out. I went in a shelter, and I was still talking to the case manager there. So they helped me, they helped me out through with housing, and they then got me with a case manager that's downtown, New York Avenue. It's in a different church. They handling nothing but cases with DC housing. They case mangers They the one that found me the apartment that I got. And then as time went on, Mr. Queen, I had to go through Mr. Queen, which is my case manager for the house. He the one that placed me into my apartment that I'm in now.

- [Jie] Okay. Okay. Now how long was the process from completing the application to receiving the voucher, and then finding the housing, to moving in?

- [Milton] You're not talking about going way back to 1986, when I first signed up, right?

- [Jie] No, no, no. I'm talking about this time that you just mentioned, how you got this new apartment in January, 2020. How long was that process?

- [Milton] Oh, that one to the shelter?

- [Jie] Yeah, yes.

- [Milton] Right. The shelter. If I hadn't of went to the shelter, I would have never got it. I got it through, when I went in the shelter. That's how it started.

- [Jie] How long long were you in the shelter?

- [Milton] For about four months.

- [Jie] Okay. Okay.

- [Milton] They put me at the top of the list because of my condition. 'Cause I was in a wheelchair, I needed wheelchair accessory. So that's why they put me at the top of the list.

- [Jie] Okay. Okay. And you were saying that you had a case manager that worked with you to complete the application and finding the apartment, is that correct?

- [Milton] Yes. She no longer work for that company no more.

- [Jie] Okay. Do you remember the name?
- [Milton] Yeah, new case manager. Dang, nope. I know where they're located. They in a church, down there, they in a church.
- [Jie] Okay.
- [Milton] On New York Avenue.
- [Jie] Yeah, go ahead.
- [Milton] Like a non-profit organization.
- [Jie] Yeah, yeah, okay. So this is a non-profit, social service agency?
- [Milton] Right. They located 13th and Kay Street, Norway.
- [Jie] Okay. Okay.
- [Milton] That big church right there on the corner.
- [Jie] Okay.
- [Milton] They in the bottom. They in the basement.
- [Jie] Okay. Did anyone from the housing authority help you, you know, identify the apartment to move in, or was it just all the help that you got from the agency that you just mentioned?
- [Milton] Most with the agent. I don't even really find out about the housing and the case manager, with Mr. Queen is my case manager for housing. I ain't find out nothing about him until they did the inspection. They had to inspect the apartment.
- [Jie] Right.
- [Milton] But that's when he came involved. I learned about him.
- Okay. Okay. Were there any other challenges that you experienced during this application process, or moving process from the shelter to your apartment?
- [Milton] I don't know. I know it's a slow process. You just gotta wait. It's a waiting thing. You just gotta be patient, man.
- [Jie] Okay.
- [Milton] Wait, till everything fall in place.

- Just so that I understand you better, so when you got into the shelter, and you stay there for four months, how soon after you arrived at the shelter did this application process begin?

- [Milton] I'll say, I'll say maybe about, a month after.

- Okay.

- [Milton] 'Cause I was already in the system. You know what I'm saying? Excuse me. I was already in the system.

- [Jie] Okay, okay.

- [Milton] The housing had me in the system since 96'.

- Okay, you're saying you were already in the housing's waiting list since 1996?

- [Milton] Yep.

- Okay, you must be referring to the housing choice voucher then?

- [Milton] Right, for housing. And then I thought, down in North, 1133.

- Okay.

- [Milton] I've been on that list since 96'.

- [Jie] Okay.

- [Milton] Reason I know that because they the ones telling how long I was on it, waiting. But I suppose I came back, you know what I'm saying? Some Easter morning, my birthday, or something.

- [Jie] Okay.

- [Milton] And I explained to them that I was working in at the time. I didn't need the assistance.

- [Jie] Okay. Okay. Can you just talk a little bit about your, the living condition that you had in the shelter? What was that like?

- [Milton] Oh, man, I mean, it was kinda good because I had somewhere to lay my head, but, as far as being comfortable, man. They didn't have no hot water. For the wheelchair. No hot water, only cold water. Then have mices and stuff in there. Like, I mean, then you had guys in there that just didn't care, man. With no way of, ain't care nothing about, they aint care nothing about living conditions. You know I mean, I mean, yeah, not many people that was, you know, wanting to do something for themselves. They got a lot of people that just in there just to be in the back, 'cause

they have somewhere to lay their head. They be getting high and all that, man. That was every day.

- [Jie] Okay. Okay. And can you talk a little bit about your current living condition? What is your apartment? What is your home like?

- [Milton] Oh, you talking about now? Where' I'm at now?

- [Jie] Yes.

- [Milton] I mean, to me, seriously, I aint got no problem here. I mean, it's quiet. They got cameras in the building, and me, I worry about people just being, hanging in the hallway, selling drugs. And they got two, secured door before you enter the building. Then he got security camera all around the building, so, it's excellent security. So I don't have no problem here.

- [Jie] Okay. Besides the security you just mentioned, what are some of the other things that you enjoy the most about your current, living conditions?

- [Milton] I mean, you go on top of the roofs sit down, with you five-minute self. I mean, yeah, you can take the elevator all the way up to the roof. They got couches and big 55 inch TV out there. Only thing, you can't smoke out there. You can sit down and drink, but, then but on the first level, they got a big TV. They got three, big TVs on, where you can go in and write a letter, or read a magazine, or something. I mean, it's very secure building. I mean, you can't ask for nothing better.

- [Jie] That's great. That's great.

- [Milton] Then, we close to the Metro.

- [Jie] Okay. Transportation, okay. We just got a few more questions left here. How has your current, living condition impacted other aspect of your life? Have you been able to, you know, develop relationships with others and get involved in a community, or have friends and family come visit you? Any other aspect of your life that has been impacted, you want to share with us?

- [Milton] Yeah. I mean, I got another case manager guest from Social Security, disability. She trying to find me a job.

- [Jie] Okay!

- [Milton] Come in Social Security, disability program, called Ticket To Work. And my case manager is in check, and she goes online, and she could see what's on NDC, on her computer, and she be job seeking for me on her computer. Then when I go in for a interview, they'll call me or send me an email, by her doing that.

- [Jie] Okay, that's good.

- [Milton] Then she sent me all, what is it, my resume. So basically, what I'm doing now is trying to find a job.

- [Jie] Okay. Okay. What kind of job are you looking for?

- [Milton] I don't really, I mean, maybe the desk work, or something? I mean, I can still do a lot of stuff like, office work. I used to do, I was a day-porter before I lost my leg. I used to do office maintenance, clean. Maintenance work.

- [Jie] Okay. Okay.

- [Milton] Custodian.

- [Jie] Yeah. You mentioned, so you mentioned you have a case manager at the Housing Authority and also a case worker from the non-profit, social service agency. And then also from the Social Security office. What are the other resources, the agencies, that are currently supporting you? Besides these that you've mentioned already.

- [Milton] Really, I mean, other than my case manager that's from Social Security, I ain't know other that's involved in what I be doing.

- [Jie] Okay.

- [Milton] You know, I don't have no nurse or nothing coming to see me because I'm high-profile, as far as, doing stuff for myself.

- [Jie] Okay. Okay.

- [Milton] I mean, I do, I cook for my own self. I wash my own clothes. I do everything for myself.

- Okay. Okay. Well, thank you for sharing all that information. Are there anything else that you would like to add, or let us know?

- [Milton] Well, I mean, I'm trying to find me a job. I mean, that's the most important thing, what I'm trying to do now. I mean, sitting home, man, does not mean we're not gonna work. And my case manager trying to find, help me find a job.

- [Jie] Okay.

- [Milton] And she in Texas though. I thank God for that. I mean, I do, I go and look at my email every day for interviews. For jobs, every day.

- [Jie] You said she's in Texas, you say?

- [Milton] So I mean, huh?

- [Jie] Did you say she's from Texas?
- [Milton] Yes. She live in Texas.
- [Jie] Okay. Are you originally from Texas?
- [Milton] These case managers from, I mean, they're from Social Security, disability, they in all 50 states
- [Jie] Right, right, right, right. Okay.
- [Milton] So, I mean, you would think my case manager'd be in DC, but I had one in DC, but I fire her, and next one I got was from Texas.
- [Jie] Got it. Got it. Got it. Okay. Okay. All right. Anything else you want to add before we wrap up?
- [Milton] No. No, I don't have nothing else.
- [Jie] Okay.
- [Milton] Other than, you know, other than trying to find me a job.
- [Jie] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I have one last question for you. Have you been sharing your story of getting an employment with others, perhaps folks at the shelter that you were at previously, or letting them know about this program?
- [Milton] Oh, most of my friends already got their apartment that was in the shelter with me.
- [Jie] Yes.
- [Milton] Most of everybody that I know has got their apartment too.
- Oh, that's great.
- [Milton] I mean, everybody at the shelter now is newcomers.
- [Jie] Okay. Well, thank you for sharing your story.
- [Milton] Sometime I might stop past there just to see what's going on. I'll talk to the case manager, my old case manager, but she not my case manager no more because I'm no longer in the shelter.
- [Jie] Right. Right. Okay. Well, thank you for sharing your story. We're gonna edit and publish this interview on the HUD website where the general public will have access to this information,

and we'll let you know when this get posted, so you can check it out and share it with your friends as well.

- [Milton] Oh, okay. So they, are they gonna post everybody's interviews?

- [Jie] Right, right, right.

- [Milton] Oh, okay. 'Cause when we first spoke, happened to a lot of other people. I ain't heard no people after that.

- [Jie] Yeah. Well, we just want to thank you for taking the time to share your story with us. Do you have any other questions for us before we let you go now?

- [Milton] Nothing I did, no.

- [Jie] Well, you did excellent. Thank you. Thank you for all the information you shared, and we wish you the best in your future.

- [Milton] All right, thank you, man.

- [Jie] All right, bye bye now.

- [Milton] All right. Thank you. All right, then.

- [Jie] Hey, Aisha.

- [Aisha] Yeah, hi there.

- [Jie] I think he did great in terms of sharing his story. Was there anything else you wanted to add to what he shared, or before we transition to the other portion of the interview?

- [Aisha] I know he said caseworkers, that Mr. Queen, but I know Mr. Queen is, we don't have caseworkers. We have housing program specialist, or housing program coordinators, but I know a lot of our clients still take our specialists as caseworkers, so that could be one clarification. But Mr. Queen is a housing program coordinator that did assist him with the visa process.

- [Jie] Okay, okay, okay.

- [Aisha] Yeah.

- [Jie] Sounds good.