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**SECTION 8**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN**  
**FOR THE**  
**HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM**

Approved by the HA Board of Commissioners:  
September 28, 2005 to be effective October 1, 2005

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## Chapter 1

### STATEMENT OF POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Section 8 Program was enacted as part of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, which recodified the U.S. Housing Act of 1937. The Act has been amended from time to time, and its requirements, as they apply to the Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance Program, is described in and implemented throughout this Administrative Plan. The Section 8 tenant-based assistance programs are federally funded and administered for Polk County by the Housing Authority and Urban Renewal Agency of Polk County dba West Valley Housing Authority.

Administration of the Section 8 Program and the functions and responsibilities of the Housing Authority (PHA) staff shall be in compliance with the PHA's Personnel Policy and the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Section 8 Regulations as well as all Federal, State and local Fair Housing Laws and Regulations.

#### **Jurisdiction**

The jurisdiction of the PHA is Polk County outside the Urban Growth Boundary of the City of Salem.

#### **A. HOUSING AUTHORITY MISSION STATEMENT**

The PHA's mission is: To serve Polk County citizens by providing quality housing for those in need and to encourage their progress toward self-sufficiency.

#### **B. LOCAL GOALS** [24 CFR 982.1]

##### **Part I**

See the Agency Plan 5-Year Plan for the specific HUD Strategic Goals.

##### **Part II**

The PHA has the following specific goals for the program:

To encourage self sufficiency of participant families and assist in the expansion of family opportunities which address educational, socio-economic, and other human services needs.

To attain and maintain a high level of standards and professionalism in our day-to-day management of all program components.

To administer an efficient, high-performing agency through continuous improvement of the PHA's support systems and commitment to our employees and their development.

To ensure that all units meet Housing Quality Standards and families pay fair and reasonable rents.

To promote fair housing and the opportunity for very low-income families of all ethnic backgrounds to experience freedom of housing choice.

**C. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN** [24 CFR 982.54]

The purpose of the Administrative Plan is to establish policies for carrying out the programs in a manner consistent with HUD requirements and local goals and objectives contained in the Agency Plan. The Housing Choice Voucher Program was implemented on 10/1/99, and pre-merger Housing Voucher tenancies and Over Fair Market Rent tenancies converted automatically to Housing Choice Voucher tenancies on that date. All other existing contracts remained in effect until the family's second reexamination after the merger date or when a new lease was executed.

The PHA is responsible for complying with all changes in HUD regulations pertaining to these programs. **If such changes conflict with this Plan, HUD regulations will have precedence.** The PHA will revise this Administrative Plan as needed to comply with changes in HUD regulations.

This Administrative Plan is a supporting document to the PHA Agency Plan, and is available for public review as required by CFR 24 Part 903.

Applicable regulations include:

24 CFR Part 5: General Program Requirements

24 CFR Part 8: Nondiscrimination

24 CFR Part 982: Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance: Housing Choice Voucher Program

Local rules that are made part of this Plan are intended to promote local housing objectives consistent with the intent of the federal housing legislation.

**D. ADMINISTRATIVE FEE RESERVE** [24 CFR 982.54(d)(21)]

Expenditures from the Administrative Reserve (Operating Reserve) for other housing purposes shall require prior approval of the West Valley Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.

## **E. RULES AND REGULATIONS** [24 CFR 982.52]

This Administrative Plan is set forth to define the PHA's local policies for operation of the housing programs in the context of Federal laws and Regulations. All issues related to Section 8 not addressed in this document are governed by such Federal regulations, HUD Memos, Notices and guidelines, or other applicable laws. The policies in this Administrative Plan have been designed to ensure compliance with the consolidated ACC and all HUD-approved applications for program funding.

## **F. TERMINOLOGY**

The Housing Authority and Urban Renewal Agency of Polk County dba West Valley Housing Authority is referred to as "PHA" or "Housing Authority" throughout this document.

"Family" is used interchangeably with "Applicant" or "Participant" and can refer to a single person family.

"Tenant" is used to refer to participants in terms of their relation to landlords.

"Landlord" and "owner" are used interchangeably.

"Disability" is used where "handicap" was formerly used.

"Non-citizens Rule" refers to the regulation effective June 19, 1995 restricting assistance to U.S. citizens and eligible immigrants.

The Section 8 program is also known as the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

"HQS" means the Housing Quality Standards required by regulations as enhanced by the PHA.

"Failure to Provide" refers to all requirements in the first Family Obligation. See "Denial or Termination of Assistance" chapter.

"Merger date" refers to October 1, 1999, which is the effective date of the merging of the Section 8 Certificate and Voucher programs into the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

See Glossary for other terminology.

**G. FAIR HOUSING POLICY** [24 CFR 982.54(d)(6)]

It is the policy of the Housing Authority to comply fully with all Federal, State, and local nondiscrimination laws and with the rules and regulations governing Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity in housing and employment.

The PHA shall not deny any family or individual the equal opportunity to apply for or receive assistance under the Section 8 Programs on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national or ethnic origin, age, familial status, handicap or disability.

To further its commitment to full compliance with applicable Civil Rights laws, the PHA will provide Federal/State/local information to Voucher holders regarding unlawful discrimination and any recourse available to families who believe they are victims of a discriminatory act. Such information will be made available during the family briefing session, and all applicable Fair Housing Information and Discrimination Complaint Forms will be made a part of the Voucher holder's briefing packet and available upon request at the front desk.

All Housing Authority staff will be provided with fair housing training and informed of the importance of affirmatively furthering fair housing and providing equal opportunity to all families, including providing reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities, as a part of the overall commitment to quality customer service. Fair Housing posters are posted throughout the Housing Authority office/s, including in the lobby and interview rooms and the equal opportunity logo will be used on all outreach materials. Staff will attend local fair housing update training sponsored by HUD and other local organizations to keep current with new developments.

Except as otherwise provided in 24 CFR 8.21(c)(1), 8.24(a), 8.25, and 8.31, no individual with disabilities shall be denied the benefits of, be excluded from participation in, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination because the PHA's facilities are inaccessible to or unusable by persons with disabilities. Posters and housing information are displayed in locations throughout the PHA's office in such a manner as to be easily readable from a wheelchair.

The West Valley Housing Authority office(s) are accessible to persons with disabilities. Accessibility for the hearing impaired is provided by the Oregon Relay Services at 1-800-735-2900.

**H. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY** [24 CFR 100.202]

It is the policy of this PHA to be service-directed in the administration of our housing programs, and to exercise and demonstrate a high level of professionalism while providing housing services to families.

A participant with a disability must first ask for a specific change to a policy or practice as an accommodation of their disability before the PHA will treat a person differently than anyone else. The PHA's policies and practices will be designed to provide

assurances that persons with disabilities will be given reasonable accommodations, upon request, so that they may fully access and utilize the housing program and related services. The availability of requesting an accommodation will be made known by including notices on PHA forms and letters. This policy is intended to afford persons with disabilities an equal opportunity to obtain the same result, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement as those who do not have disabilities and is applicable to all situations described in this Administrative Plan including when a family initiates contact with the PHA, when the PHA initiates contact with a family including when a family applies, and when the PHA schedules or reschedules appointments of any kind.

To be eligible to request a reasonable accommodation, the requester must first certify (if apparent) or verify (if not apparent) that they are a person with a disability under the following ADA definition:

A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual;

A record of such impairment; or

Being regarded as having such an impairment

*Note: This is not the same as the HUD definition used for purposes of determining eligibility for the \$400 deduction for elderly and disabled families.*

Rehabilitated former drug users and alcoholics are covered under the ADA. However, a current drug user is not covered. In accordance with 5.403, individuals are not considered disabled for eligibility purposes solely on the basis of any drug or alcohol dependence. Individuals whose drug or alcohol addiction is a material factor to their disability are excluded from the definition. Individuals are considered disabled if disabling mental and physical limitations would persist if drug or alcohol abuse discontinued.

Once the person's status as a qualified person with a disability is confirmed, the PHA will require that a professional third party competent to make the assessment, provides written verification that the person needs the specific accommodation due to their disability and the change is required for them to have equal access to the housing program.

If the PHA finds that the requested accommodation creates an undue administrative or financial burden, the PHA will deny the request and/or present an alternate accommodation that will still meet the need of the person.

An undue administrative burden is one that requires a fundamental alteration of the essential functions of the PHA (i.e., waiving a family obligation).

An undue financial burden is one that when considering the available resources of the agency as a whole, the requested accommodation would pose a severe financial hardship on the PHA.

The PHA will provide a written decision to the person requesting the accommodation within a reasonable time period. If a person is denied the accommodation or feels that the alternative suggestions are inadequate, they may request an informal hearing to review the PHA's decision.

Reasonable accommodation will be made for persons with a disability that requires an advocate or accessible offices. A designee will be allowed to provide some information, but only with the permission of the person with the disability.

All PHA mailings will be made available in an accessible format upon request, as a reasonable accommodation.

### **Verification of Disability**

The PHA will verify disabilities under definitions in the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988, Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, and Americans with Disabilities Act.

### **Applying for Admission**

All persons who wish to apply for any of the PHA's programs must submit an application. Applications will be made available in an accessible format upon request from a person with a disability.

To provide specific accommodation to persons with disabilities, upon request, the information may be mailed to the applicant and, if requested, it will be mailed in an accessible format.

The application is to be completed in the applicant's own handwriting, unless assistance is needed, or a request for accommodation is requested by a person with a disability. Applicants will then be interviewed by PHA staff to review the information on the full application form. Verification of disability as it relates to 504, Fair Housing, or ADA reasonable accommodation will be requested at this time, if applicable. The full application will also include questions asking all applications whether reasonable accommodations are necessary.

### **Access to the Housing Choice Voucher FSS Program and Services**

The PHA shall not deny any family or individual the equal opportunity to apply for or receive assistance under the Section 8 Programs, including the Housing Choice Voucher FSS Program, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national or ethnic origin, age, familial status, handicap or disability. For clients wishing to investigate the possibility of FSS participation, PHA staff will connect the client with the appropriate FSS employee who will then explain how the program works. As well, marketing material will be made available to all of our clients, and may be presented in a different form, if necessary, for a person with a disability.

The explanation of Reasonable Accommodation, in the Administrative Plan, should not be considered all-inclusive for the Housing Authority. A more detailed explanation of the PHA's Reasonable Accommodation processes and procedures can be found in the Reasonable Accommodation Policy.

## **I. TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS**

The Housing Authority has bilingual staff to assist non-English speaking families in Spanish and translates documents into Spanish.

In determining whether it is feasible to provide translation of documents written in English into other languages, the PHA will consider the following factors:

Number of applicants and participants in the jurisdiction, who do not speak English and speak another language.

Estimated cost to PHA per client of translation of English written documents into the other language.

The availability of local organizations to provide translation services to non-English speaking families.

The availability of bi-lingual staff to provide translation for non-English speaking families.

For more details, see the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan.

## **J. MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES**

The PHA operates its housing assistance program with efficiency and can demonstrate to HUD auditors that the PHA is using its resources in a manner that reflects its commitment to quality and service. The PHA policies and practices are consistent with the areas of measurement for the following HUD SEMAP indicators.

Selection from the Waiting List

Reasonable Rent

Determination of Adjusted Income

Utility Allowance Schedule

HQS Quality Control Inspections

HQS Enforcement

Expanding Housing Opportunities

Payment Standards

Annual Re-examinations

Correct Tenant Rent Calculations

Pre-Contract HQS Inspections

Annual HQS Inspections

Lease-up

Family Self-Sufficiency Enrollment and Escrow Account Balances

Supervisory quality control reviews will be performed by a PHA Supervisor or other qualified person other than the person who performed the work, as required by HUD, on the following SEMAP factors:

Selection from the waiting list

Rent reasonableness

Determination of adjusted income

HQS Enforcement

HQS Quality Control

The annual sample of files and records will be drawn in an unbiased manner, leaving a clear audit trail.

The minimum sample size to be reviewed will relate directly to each factor.

## **K. RECORDS FOR MONITORING PHA PERFORMANCE**

In order to demonstrate compliance with HUD and other pertinent regulations, the PHA will maintain records, reports and other documentation for a time that is in accordance with HUD requirements and in a manner that will allow an auditor, housing professional or other interested party to follow, monitor and or assess the PHA's operational procedures objectively and with accuracy and in accordance with SEMAP requirements with internal supervisory audits.

In addition to the required SEMAP documentation, supervisory staff will audit the following functions:

Not less than 50% of new applications prior to briefing

Not less than 50% of new contracts, including moves

Not less than 50% of all Rent Reasonableness Approvals

Not less than 10% of reexaminations

**L. PRIVACY RIGHTS** [24 CFR 982.551 and 24 CFR 5.212]

Applicants and participants, including all adults in their households, are required to sign the HUD 9886 Authorization for Release of Information. This document incorporates the Federal Privacy Act Statement and describes the conditions under which HUD/PHA will release family information.

The PHA's policy regarding release of information is in accordance with State and local laws which may restrict the release of family information.

Any and all information which would lead one to determine the nature and/or severity of a person's disability must be kept in a separate folder and marked "confidential" or returned to the family member after its use. The personal information in this folder must not be released except on an "as needed" basis in cases where an accommodation is under consideration. All requests for access and granting of accommodations based on this information must be approved by the Executive Director or the Section 8 and Occupancy Manager.

PHA staff will not discuss family information contained in files unless there is a business reason to do so. Inappropriate discussion of family information, or improper disclosure of family information by staff will result in disciplinary action.

**M. FAMILY OUTREACH**

The PHA will publicize and disseminate information to make known the availability of housing assistance and related services for very low income families on a regular basis. The PHA will publicize the availability and nature of housing assistance for very low income families through public service announcements, press releases, and/or display ads in the local "Itemizer-Observer" newspaper. Additional outreach will be made through providing presentations and written program brochures at the local area Service Integration Leadership Council monthly meetings and by public service announcements provided to the local area radio stations, including the Spanish language station. Notices will also be provided in Spanish.

The PHA will communicate the status of housing availability to other service providers in the community, and advise them of housing eligibility factors and guidelines in order that they can make proper referrals for housing assistance. West Valley Housing Authority actively participates in the Polk County Service Integration Network and provides presentations periodically.

## **N. OWNER OUTREACH** [24 CFR 982.54(d)(5)]

The PHA makes a concerted effort to keep private owners informed of legislative changes in the tenant-based program, which are designed to make the program more attractive to owners. This includes informing participant owners of applicable legislative changes in program requirements.

The PHA encourages owners of decent, safe and sanitary housing units to lease to Section 8 families.

The PHA encourages participation by owners of suitable units located outside areas of low poverty or minority concentration.

The PHA conducts periodic meetings with participating owners to improve owner relations and to recruit new owners.

The PHA maintains a list of landlords who have a number of rental units and are willing to rent to Section 8 Voucher holders. This list is provided in the Section 8 briefing packet.

The PHA maintains a rental listing bulletin board of available rental housing submitted by owners in all neighborhoods within the Housing Authority's jurisdiction to ensure greater mobility and housing choice to very low income households. Clients can retrieve the information during open office hours as this rental listing bulletin board is kept in the PHA's lobby.

The staff of the PHA initiates personal contact with private property owners and managers by conducting formal and informal discussions and meetings.

Printed material, an owner outreach brochure, is offered to acquaint owners and managers with the opportunities available under the program. These brochures are provided in the briefing packets, in the PHA lobby, in the local Chamber of Commerce offices, and in the local real estate offices in the area.

The PHA has active participation in a community based organization(s) comprised of private property and apartment owners and managers.

The PHA encourages program participation by owners of units located outside areas of poverty or minority concentration. The PHA periodically evaluates the demographic distribution of assisted families to identify areas within the jurisdiction where owner outreach should be targeted. The purpose of these activities is to provide more choices and better housing opportunities to families. Voucher holders are informed of a broad range of areas where they may lease units inside the PHA's jurisdiction and given a list of landlords or other parties who are willing to lease units or help families who desire to live outside areas of poverty or minority concentration.

## Chapter 2

### ELIGIBILITY FOR ADMISSION

[24 CFR Part 5, Subparts B, D & E; Part 982, Subpart E]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This Chapter defines both HUD and the PHA's criteria for admission and denial of admission to the program. The policy of this PHA is to strive for objectivity and consistency in applying these criteria to evaluate the eligibility of families who apply. The PHA staff will review all information provided by the family carefully and without regard to factors other than those defined in this Chapter. Families will be provided the opportunity to explain their circumstances, to furnish additional information, if needed, and to receive an explanation of the basis for any decision made by the PHA pertaining to their eligibility.

#### **A. ELIGIBILITY FACTORS** [982.201(b)]

The PHA accepts applications only from families whose head or spouse is at least 18 years of age or if the head or spouse is considered able to legally enter into a lease or rental agreement under Oregon State Law.

To be eligible for participation, an applicant must meet HUD's criteria, as well as any permissible additional criteria established by the PHA.

The HUD eligibility criteria are:

An applicant must be a "family"

An applicant must be within the appropriate Income Limits

An applicant must furnish verification of Social Security Numbers for all family members

An applicant must furnish declaration of Citizenship or Eligible Immigrant Status and verification as required

At least one member of the applicant family must be either a U.S. citizen or have eligible immigration status before the PHA may provide any financial assistance.

Reasons for denial of admission are addressed in the "Denial or Termination of Assistance" chapter. These reasons for denial constitute additional admission criteria.

The Family's initial eligibility for placement on the waiting list will be made in accordance with the eligibility factors.

Eligibility factors, other than income, will be verified before the family is placed on the waiting list. Income will be verified when the family gets near the top of the waiting list and it is anticipated that assistance will be available within the next 60-days.

## **B. FAMILY COMPOSITION** [24 CFR 982.201(c)]

The applicant must qualify as a Family. A Family may be a single person or a group of persons.

A "family" includes a family with or without a child or children. A group of persons consisting of two or more elderly persons or disabled persons living together, or one or more elderly or disabled persons living with one or more live-in aides is a family. The PHA determines if any other group of persons qualifies as a "family".

A single person family may be:

- An elderly person

- A displaced person

- A person with a disability

Individuals may not be considered disabled for eligibility purposes solely on the basis of any drug or alcohol dependence.

- Any other single person

A child who is temporarily away from home because of placement in foster care is considered a member of the family. This provision only pertains to the foster child's temporary absence from the home, and is not intended to artificially enlarge the space available for other family members.

A family also includes:

- Two or more persons who intend to share residency whose income and resources are available to meet the family's needs and who have a history as a family unit or show evidence of a stable family relationship.

- Two or more elderly or disabled persons living together, or one or more elderly, near elderly or disabled persons living with one or more live-in aides is a family.

## **Head of Household**

The head of household is the **adult** member of the household who is designated by the family as head, is wholly or partly responsible for paying the rent, and has the legal capacity to enter into a lease under State/local law. Persons under 18 years of age who qualify under State law can be recognized as head of household.

## **Spouse of Head**

Spouse means the husband or wife of the head.

For proper application of the Non-citizens Rule, the definition of spouse is: the marriage partner whom, in order to dissolve the relationship, would have to be divorced. It includes the partner in a common law marriage. The term "spouse" does not apply to boyfriends, girlfriends, significant others, or co-heads.

## **Co-Head**

An individual in the household, who is equally responsible for the lease with the Head of Household, can be a co-head. A family may have a spouse or co-head, but not both. A co-head never qualifies as a dependent.

## **Live-in Attendants**

A Family may include a live-in aide provided that such live-in aide:

Is determined by the PHA to be essential to the care and well being of an elderly person, a near-elderly person, or a person with disabilities,

Is not obligated for the support of the person(s), and

Would not be living in the unit, except to provide care for the person(s).

A live-in aide is treated differently than family members:

Income of the live-in aide will not be counted for purposes of determining eligibility or level of benefits.

Live-in aides are not subject to Non-Citizen Rule requirements.

Live-in aides may not be considered as a remaining member of the tenant family.

Relatives are not automatically excluded from being live-in aides, but they must meet all of the elements in the live-in aide definition described above.

A Live in Aide may only reside in the unit with the approval of the PHA. Written verification will be required from a reliable, knowledgeable professional, such as a doctor, social worker, or caseworker. The verification provider must certify that a live-in aide is needed for the care of the family member who is elderly, near-elderly (50-61) or disabled.

The PHA will approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation to make the program accessible to and usable by the family member with a disability. Approval of a live-in aide for reasonable accommodation will be in accordance with CFR 24 Part 8 and the reasonable accommodations section in Chapter 1 of this Administrative Plan.

Verification must be provided to document that there is the need for live-in assistance rather than a need that can be met by daily help that would not need to be present during the nighttime hours.

[24 CFR 982.316] At any time, the PHA will refuse to approve a particular person as a live-in aide or may withdraw such approval if:

The person commits fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program;

The person commits drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity; or

The person currently owes rent or other amounts to the PHA or to another PHA in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act.

Occasional, intermittent, multiple or rotating attendants do not meet the definition of a live-in attendant since "live-in" implies the attendant must reside with the family permanently. These types of attendants shall not be considered in the PHA's Voucher Subsidy Standards.

### **Split Households Prior to Voucher Issuance**

When a family on the waiting list splits into two otherwise eligible families due to divorce or legal separation, and the new families both claim the same placement on the waiting list, and there is no court determination, the PHA will make the decision taking into consideration the following factors:

Which family member applied as head of household.

Which family unit retains the children or any disabled or elderly members.

Role of domestic violence in the split.

Recommendations of social service agencies or qualified professionals such as children's protective services.

Documentation of these factors is the responsibility of the applicant families. If either or both of the families do not provide the documentation, they may be denied placement on the waiting list for failure to supply information requested by the PHA.

In cases where domestic violence played a role, the standard used for verification will be the same as that required for the "domestic violence" preference.

The PHA will require evidence that the family has been displaced as a result of fleeing violence in the home. Families are also eligible for this preference if there is proof that the family is currently living in a situation where they are being subjected to or victimized by violence in the home (See "Establishing Preferences and Maintaining the Waiting List" chapter).

## **Multiple Families in the Same Household**

When families apply which consist of two families living together, (such as a mother and father, and a daughter with her own husband or children), if they apply as a family unit, they will be treated as a family unit.

## **Joint Custody of Children**

Children who are subject to a joint custody agreement but live with one parent at least 51% of the time will be considered members of the household. "51% of the time" is defined as 183 days of the year, which do not have to run consecutively.

When both parents are on the Waiting List and both are trying to claim the child, the parent whose address is listed in the school records will be allowed to claim the school-age child as a dependent.

## **C. INCOME LIMITATIONS** [24 CFR 982.201(b), 982.353]

To be eligible for assistance, an applicant must:

Have an Annual Income at the time of admission that does not exceed the **very low-income** limits for occupancy established by HUD.

To be income eligible the applicant must be a family in the very low-income category, which is a family whose income does not exceed 50 percent of the area median income. The PHA will not admit families whose income exceeds 50 percent of the area median income except those families included in 24 CFR 982.201(b).

To be income eligible, the family may be under the low-income limit in any of the following categories: [24 CFR 982.201(b)]

A very low-income family.

A low-income family that is continuously assisted under the 1937 Housing Act. An applicant is continuously assisted if the family has received assistance under any 1937 Housing Act program within 180 days of voucher issuance. Programs include any housing federally assisted under the 1937 Housing Act.

A low-income family physically displaced by rental rehabilitation activity under 24 CFR part 511.

A low-income non-purchasing family residing in a HOPE 1 or HOPE 2 project.

A low-income non-purchasing family residing in a project subject to a home-ownership program under 24 CFR 248.173.

A low-income family or moderate income family that is displaced as a result of the prepayment of a mortgage or voluntary termination of a mortgage insurance contract under 24 CFR 248.165.

A low-income family that qualifies for Voucher assistance as a non-purchasing family residing in a project subject to a resident home ownership program.

To determine if the family is income-eligible, the PHA compares the Annual Income of the family to the applicable income limit for the family's size.

Families whose Annual Income exceeds the income limit will be denied admission and offered an informal review.

Portability: For initial lease-up at admission, families who exercise portability must be within the applicable income limit for the jurisdiction of the receiving PHA in which they want to live.

**D. DISCLOSURE OF MANDATORY SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS** [24 CFR 5.216, 5.218]

Families are required to provide verification of Social Security Numbers for all family members prior to admission if the family member has been issued a number by the Social Security Administration. This requirement also applies to persons joining the family after admission to the program.

**EXEMPTIONS TO DISCLOSURE:**

1. Individuals who do not contend to have eligible immigration status;
2. Existing participants, as of January 31, 2010, who are 62 years of age or older and had not previously disclosed a valid Social Security Number. This exemption continues even if the individual moves to a new assisted unit;
3. Existing participants who have already disclosed their Social Security Number and HUD has determined the Social Security Number as Valid.

Failure to furnish verification of Social Security Numbers is grounds for denial or termination of assistance.

Persons who have not been issued a Social Security Number must sign a certification that they have never been issued a Social Security Number.

For details on verification of Social Security Numbers, see Chapter 7.

**E. CITIZENSHIP/ELIGIBLE IMMIGRATION STATUS** [24 CFR Part 5, Subpart E]

In order to receive assistance, a family member must be a U.S. citizen or eligible immigrant. Individuals, who are neither, may elect not to contend their status. Eligible immigrants are persons who are in one of the immigrant categories as specified by HUD.

For the Citizenship/Eligible Immigration requirement, the status of each member of the family is considered individually before the family's status is defined.

Mixed Families. A family is eligible for assistance as long as at least one member is a citizen or eligible immigrant. Families that include eligible and ineligible individuals are called "mixed." Such applicant families will be given notice that their assistance will be pro-rated and that they may request a hearing if they contest this determination.

All members ineligible. Applicant families that include no eligible members are ineligible for assistance. Such families will be denied admission and offered an opportunity for a hearing.

Non-citizen students. Defined by HUD in the non-citizen regulations at 24 CFR 5.522. Not eligible for assistance.

Appeals. For this eligibility requirement only, the applicant is entitled to a hearing exactly like those provided for participants.

#### **F. OTHER CRITERIA FOR ADMISSIONS** [24 CFR 982.552(b)]

A family will not be admitted to the program if any member of the family has been evicted from federally assisted housing for serious violation of the lease within the past **five** years.

A family will be denied admission to the program if any member of the family fails to sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information required by the PHA, including Form HUD-9886.

The PHA will apply the following criteria, in addition to the HUD eligibility criteria, as grounds for denial of admission to the program:

The family must not have violated any family obligation during a previous participation in the Section 8 program for five years prior to final eligibility determination. (If the violation was failure to give the PHA notice before moving, the PHA will consider the circumstances under which the failure occurred, such as fleeing a domestic violence situation, before enforcing this reason for denial of admission.)

The PHA may make an exception, if the family member who violated the family obligation is not a current member of the household on the application.

The family must pay any outstanding debt owed the PHA or another PHA as a result of prior participation in any federal housing program prior to admission and would have to enter into a repayment agreement and keep it current while on the waiting list.

The PHA will check criminal history for all adults in the household to determine whether any member of the family has violated any of the prohibited behaviors as referenced in the section on screening and terminations policy in the "Denial

or Termination of Assistance" chapter. The standard method for checking criminal records will include a check of Oregon records through a third-party vendor such as OpenOnline.

If any applicant deliberately misrepresents the information on which eligibility or tenant rent is established, the PHA may deny assistance and may refer the family file/record to the proper authorities for appropriate disposition. (See Program Integrity Addendum).

**G. TENANT SCREENING** [24 CFR 982.307]

The PHA will take into consideration any of the criteria for admission described in the "Denial or Termination of Assistance" chapter.

The PHA **will not** screen family behavior or suitability for tenancy. The PHA will not be liable or responsible to the owner or other persons for the family's behavior or the family's conduct in tenancy.

The owner is responsible for screening and selection of the family to occupy the owner's unit. At or before PHA approval of the tenancy, the PHA will inform the owner that screening and selection for tenancy is the responsibility of the owner.

The owner is responsible for screening families based on their tenancy histories, including such factors as:[24 CFR 982.307(a)(3)]

Payment of rent and utility bills

Caring for a unit and premises

Respecting the rights of other residents to the peaceful enjoyment of their housing

Drug-related criminal activity or other criminal activity that is a threat to the health, safety or property of others; and

Compliance with other essential conditions of tenancy.

The PHA will give the owner:

The family's current and prior address as shown in the PHA's records; and

The name and address (if known by the PHA) of the landlord at the family's current and prior address.

The PHA will provide the owner the following other information, orally and based upon documentation in the PHA's possession concerning the family, only if the owner provides a written release signed by the family:

Information about the family's criminal or drug-related activity;

Information about the family's eviction history;

Information about any damage to rental units caused by the family, or

Information about drug-trafficking by family members.

The same types of information will be supplied to all owners, who inquire with the PHA.

The PHA will advise families how to file a complaint if they have been discriminated against by an owner. The PHA will advise the family to make a Fair Housing complaint. The PHA may also report the owner to HUD (Fair Housing/Equal Opportunity) or the local Fair Housing Organization.

#### **H. CHANGES IN ELIGIBILITY PRIOR TO EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE CONTRACT**

Changes that occur during the period between issuance of a voucher and lease up may affect the family's eligibility or share of the rental payment.

#### **I. INELIGIBLE FAMILIES**

Families who are determined to be ineligible will be notified in writing of the reason for denial and given an opportunity to request an informal review, or an informal hearing if they were denied due to noncitizen status. See "Complaints and Appeals" chapter for additional information about reviews and hearings.

#### **J. PROHIBITED ADMISSIONS CRITERIA** [982.202(b)]

Admission to the program may not be based on:

Where a family lives prior to admission to the program.

Where the family will live with assistance under the program.

Discrimination because members of the family are unwed parents, recipients of public assistance, or children born out of wedlock.

Discrimination because a family includes children.

Whether a family decides to participate in a family self sufficiency program; or

Other reasons as listed in the "Statement of Policies and Objectives" chapter under the Fair Housing and Reasonable Accommodations sections.

## Chapter 3

### APPLYING FOR ADMISSION

[24 CFR 982.204]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The policy of the PHA is to ensure that all families who express an interest in housing assistance are given an equal opportunity to apply, and are treated in a fair and consistent manner. This Chapter describes the policies and procedures for completing an initial application for assistance, placement and denial of placement on the waiting list, and limitations on who may apply. The primary purpose of the intake function is to gather information about the family, but the PHA will also utilize this process to provide information to the family so that an accurate and timely decision of eligibility can be made. Applicants will be placed on the waiting list in accordance with this Plan.

#### **A. OVERVIEW OF THE APPLICATION TAKING PROCESS**

The purpose of application taking is to permit the PHA to gather information and determine placement on the waiting list. The application will contain questions designed to obtain pertinent program information.

Families who wish to apply for any one of the PHA's programs must complete a written application form when application-taking is open. Applications will be made available in an accessible format upon request from a person with a disability.

When the waiting list is open, any family asking to be placed on the waiting list for Section 8 rental assistance will be given the opportunity to complete an application. Applications will be mailed to interested families upon request.

The application process will involve two phases. The first is the "initial" application for assistance. This first phase results in the family's placement on the waiting list based upon self-declaration of income. The application will be dated, time-denoted, and referred to the PHA's eligibility office where it will be maintained until such time as it is needed for processing.

The second phase is the "final determination of eligibility" (referred to as the full application). The full application takes place when the family reaches the top of the waiting list. At this time the PHA ensures that verification of all HUD and PHA eligibility factors is current in order to determine the family's eligibility for the issuance of a voucher.

**B. OPENING/CLOSING OF APPLICATION TAKING** [24 CFR 982.206, 982.54(d)(1)]

**Opening the Waiting List**

The PHA will utilize the following procedures for opening the waiting list (should the waiting list ever be closed for a period of time):

When the PHA opens the waiting list, the PHA will advertise through public notice in the local Itemizer-Observer newspaper and will advise the Service Integration Network to get the information out to all, including minorities and disabled persons.

The notice will contain:

The dates, times, and the locations where families may apply.

The programs for which applications will be taken.

A brief description of the program.

A statement that public housing residents must submit a separate application if they want to apply for section 8.

Limitations, if any, on who may apply.

The notices will be made in an accessible format if requested. They will provide potential applicants with information that includes the PHA address and telephone number, how to submit an application and information on eligibility requirements.

Upon request from a person with a disability, additional time will be given as an accommodation for submission of an application after the closing deadline. This accommodation is to allow persons with disabilities the opportunity to submit an application in cases when a social service organization provides inaccurate or untimely information about the closing date.

If the waiting list is open, the PHA will accept applications from eligible families unless there is good cause for not accepting the application, such as denial of assistance because of action or inaction by members of the family for the grounds stated in the "Denial or Termination of Assistance" chapter of this Administrative Plan. [24 CFR 982.206(b)(2)]

## **Closing the Waiting List**

The PHA may stop applications if there are enough applicants to fill anticipated openings for the next **24** months. The waiting list may not be closed if it would have a discriminatory effect inconsistent with applicable civil rights laws.

### **The PHA will announce the closing of the waiting list by public notice.**

The open period shall be long enough to achieve a waiting list adequate to cover projected turnover and new allocations over the next **24** months. The PHA will give at least **seven** days' notice prior to closing the list. When the period for accepting applications is over, the PHA will add the new applicants to the list by:

Separating the new applicants into groups based on preferences and ranking applicants within each group by date and time of application.

## **Limits on Who May Apply**

When the waiting list is open:

Any family asking to be placed on the waiting list for Section 8 rental assistance will be given the opportunity to complete an application.

When the application is submitted to the PHA:

It establishes the family's date and time of application for placement order on the waiting list.

## **C. "INITIAL" APPLICATION PROCEDURES** [24 CFR 982.204(b)]

The PHA will utilize a written application form. The information is to be filled out by the applicant whenever possible. To provide specific accommodation for persons with disabilities, the information may be completed by a staff person. It may also be mailed to the applicant and, if requested, it will be mailed in an accessible format. Translations will be provided for non-English speaking applicants in Spanish.

The purpose of the "Initial" application is to permit the PHA to preliminarily assess family eligibility or ineligibility and to determine placement on the waiting list. The application will contain full and complete information, including but not limited to:

Applicant name

Family Unit Size (number of bedrooms the family qualifies for under PHA subsidy standards)

- Date and time of application

- Qualification for any local preference
- Racial or ethnic designation of the head of household
- Annual (gross) family income
- Any preference status
- Targeted program qualifications

Duplicate applications, including applications from a segment of an applicant household, will not be accepted.

Ineligible families **will not** be placed on the waiting list.

The information on the application **will not** be verified until the applicant has been selected for final eligibility determination. Final eligibility will be determined when the full application process is completed and all information is verified.

**D. APPLICANT STATUS WHILE ON WAITING LIST** [CFR 982.204]

Applicants are required to inform the PHA of changes in address. Applicants are also required to respond to requests from the PHA to update information on their application and to determine their continued interest in assistance.

If, after a review of the application the family is determined to be preliminarily eligible, they will be notified in writing or in an accessible format upon request, as a reasonable accommodation.

The notice will contain the approximate date that assistance may be offered, and will further explain that the estimated date is subject to factors such as turnover and available funding. This notification is considered to be a receipt of their application and should be retained for future reference.

This written notification of preliminary eligibility will be:

Given to the applicant at the time the application is submitted; or

Mailed to the applicant by first class mail; or

Distributed to the applicant in the manner requested as a specific accommodation.

If the family is determined to be ineligible based on the information provided in the application, the PHA will notify the family in writing (in an accessible format upon request as a reasonable accommodation), state the reason(s), and inform them of their

right to an informal review. Persons with disabilities may request to have an advocate attend the informal review as an accommodation. See "Complaints and Appeals" chapter.

#### **E. TIME OF SELECTION** [24 CFR 982.204]

When funding is available, families will be selected from the waiting list in their determined sequence, regardless of family size, subject to income targeting requirements.

When there is insufficient funding available for the family at the top of the list, the PHA will not admit any other applicant until funding is available for the first applicant.

**Based on the PHA's turnover and the availability of funding, groups of families will be selected from the waiting list to form a final eligibility "pool." Selection from the pool will be based on completion of verification and file processing to attend a briefing.**

#### **E. COMPLETION OF A FULL APPLICATION**

All preferences claimed on the application will be verified whenever the family claims a preference.

The qualification for preference must exist at the time the preference is claimed and at the time of verification, because claim of a preference determines placement on the waiting list.

After the preference is verified, when the PHA is ready to select applicants, applicants will be required to:

Complete a Personal Declaration Form prior to the full application interview, unless assistance is needed, or a request for accommodation is made by a person with a disability. Applicant will then be interviewed by PHA staff to review the information on the Personal Declaration form.

#### **Requirement to Attend Interview**

The PHA utilizes the full application interview to discuss the family's circumstances in greater detail, to clarify information which has been provided by the family, and to ensure that the information is complete. The interview is also used as a vehicle to meet the informational needs of the family by providing information about the application and verification process, as well as to advise the family of other PHA services or programs which may be available.

All adult family members are required to attend the interview and sign the housing application and/or the subsequent Personal Declaration form. Exceptions may be made

for students attending school out of state/for members for whom attendance would be a hardship.

It is the applicant's responsibility to reschedule the interview if s/he misses the appointment. If the applicant does not reschedule, the PHA will reject the application. Applicants who fail to appear and want to reschedule a missed appointment must make the request to reschedule no later than seven days from the original appointment date.

Reasonable accommodation will be made for persons with a disability who require an advocate or accessible offices. A designee will be allowed to participate in the interview process, but only with permission of the person with a disability.

If an application is denied due to failure to attend the full application interview, the applicant will be notified in writing and offered an opportunity to request an informal review. (See "Complaints and Appeals "chapter.)

All adult members must sign the HUD Form 9886, Release of Information, the application form and all supplemental forms required by the PHA, the declarations and consents related to citizenship/immigration status and any other documents required by the PHA. Applicants will be required to sign specific verification forms for information which is not covered by the HUD form 9886. Failure to do so will be cause for denial of the application for failure to provide necessary certifications and release as required by the PHA.

Every adult household member must sign a consent form to release criminal records and to allow PHAs to receive records and use them in accordance with HUD regulations.

If the PHA determines at or after the interview that additional information or document(s) are needed, the PHA will request the document(s) or information. If needed, the PHA will send a follow-up written notification for the needed document(s) or information and will be given a reasonable number of days to supply the information. If the information is not supplied in this time period, the PHA will provide the family a notification of denial for assistance. (See "Complaints and Appeals" chapter)

#### **G. VERIFICATION** [24 CFR 982.201(e)]

Information provided by the applicant will be verified, using the verification procedures in the "Verification Procedures" chapter. Family composition, income, allowances and deductions, assets, full-time student status, eligibility and rent calculation factors, and other pertinent information will be verified. Verifications may not be more than 60 days old at the time of issuance of the Voucher.

#### **H. FINAL DETERMINATION AND NOTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY** [24 CFR 982.201]

After the verification process is completed, the PHA will make a final determination of eligibility. This decision is based upon information provided by the family, the

verification completed by the PHA, and the current eligibility criteria in effect. If the family is determined to be eligible, the PHA will contact the family to attend a briefing. A briefing will be scheduled for the issuance of a voucher and the family's orientation to the housing program.

## Chapter 4

### ESTABLISHING PREFERENCES AND MAINTAINING THE WAITING LIST

[24 CFR Part 5, Subpart D; 982.54(d)(1); 982.204, 982.205, 982.206]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

It is the PHA's objective to ensure that families are placed in the proper order on the waiting list and selected from the waiting list for admissions in accordance with the policies in this Administrative Plan.

This chapter explains the nine local preferences which the PHA has adopted to meet local housing needs, defines the eligibility criteria for the preferences and explains the PHA's system of applying them.

By maintaining an accurate waiting list, the PHA will be able to perform the activities which ensure that an adequate pool of qualified applicants will be available so that program funds are used in a timely manner.

#### **A. WAITING LIST** [24 CFR 982.204]

The PHA uses a single waiting list for admission to its Section 8 tenant-based assistance program.

Except for Special Admissions, applicants will be selected from the PHA waiting list in accordance with policies and preferences and income targeting requirements defined in this Administrative Plan.

The PHA will maintain information that permits proper selection from the waiting list.

#### **B. SPECIAL ADMISSIONS** [24 CFR 982.54(d)(e), 982.203]

If HUD awards a PHA program funding that is targeted for specifically named families, the PHA will admit these families under a Special Admission procedure.

Special admissions families will be admitted outside of the regular waiting list process. They do not have to qualify for any preferences, nor are they required to be on the program waiting list. The PHA maintains separate records of these admissions.

The following are examples of types of program funding that may be designated by HUD for families living in a specified unit:

A family displaced because of demolition or disposition of a public or Indian housing project;

A family residing in a multifamily rental housing project when HUD sells, forecloses or demolishes the project;

For housing covered by the Low Income Housing Preservation and Resident Home-ownership Act of 1990;

A family residing in a project covered by a project-based Section 8 HAP contract at or near the end of the HAP contract term; and

A non-purchasing family residing in a HOPE 1 or HOPE 2 project.

Applicants who are admitted under Special Admissions, rather than from the waiting list, are identified by codes in the automated system and are not maintained on separate lists.

**C. LOCAL PREFERENCES** [24 CFR 982.207]

The PHA uses the following local preference system:

1. Applicant families who are current WVHA Public Housing residents that are being displaced due to planned or emergency remodel activities when they will be required to move within the next six months.
2. Victims of domestic violence: The PHA will offer a local preference to families that have been subjected to or victimized by a member of the family or household within the past 6 months and who have been accepted into SABLE House, the local shelter, and who have continued to be under counseling or case management through SABLE House, or through another professionally recognized counseling organization as recommended by SABLE House, provided the identified abuser is not a member of the applicant family. The PHA will require evidence that the family has been displaced as a result of fleeing violence in the home. Families are also eligible for this preference if there is proof that the family is currently living in a situation where they are being subjected to or victimized by violence in the home. The following criteria are used to establish a family's eligibility for this preference:

Actual or threatened physical violence directed against the applicant or the applicant's family by a spouse or other household member who lives in the unit with the family.

The actual or threatened violence must have occurred within the past 60 days or be of a continuing nature.

An applicant who lives in a violent neighborhood or is fearful of other violence outside the household is not considered involuntarily displaced.

Documentation of the continued participation in counseling must be provided to the PHA both at the point of application and at the time of issuance of a voucher.

The applicant must certify that the abuser will not reside with the applicant unless the PHA gives prior written approval.

The PHA may approve the return of the abuser to the household under the following conditions:

The PHA verifies that the abuser has received therapy or counseling that appears to minimize the likelihood of recurrence of violent behavior.

A counselor, therapist or other appropriate professional recommends in writing that the individual be allowed to reside with the family.

If the abuser returns to the family without approval of the PHA, the PHA will deny or terminate assistance for breach of the certification.

**(At the family's request, the PHA will take precautions to ensure that the new location of the family is concealed in cases of domestic abuse.)**

3. Current residents of Public Housing who need to move to address the medical or physical housing needs of the family. This option will only be used when no appropriate units are available or can reasonably be expected to be available within a one year period.
4. Applicants accepted into "special needs" projects based upon prior approval by the Housing Authority Board. Current approved "special needs" projects are limited to the Lease-to-Own program (through Polk CDC); the "Buyback" program (through Polk CDC); and, a specific project identified in order to protect the local government's interest in an existing rehabilitation loan program administered by Polk CDC.
5. Applicants identified in order to provide housing assistance for not less than 9 clients of Polk County Mental Health as an aggregate total to be assisted at all times.
6. Families who are involuntarily displaced if they are required to vacate housing as a result of (1) a federally declared disaster (fire, flood, earthquake, etc.) that has caused their home to be uninhabitable, if special disaster relief funds are made available by the federal government; and (2) federal, state or local action related to code enforcement related to public health conditions.
7. Victims of reprisals: To avoid reprisals because the family provided information on criminal activities to a law enforcement agency and, after a threat assessment, the law enforcement agency recommends re-housing the family to avoid or reduce risk of violence against the family. The family must be part of a Witness Protection Program, or the HUD Office or law enforcement agency must have informed the PHA that the family is part of a similar program. The PHA will take precautions to ensure that the new location of the family is concealed in cases of witness protection.

8. Victims of hate crimes: if a member of the family has been the victim of crimes as defined in state statute ORS 166.155, and the applicant has vacated the unit because of the crime or the fear of such a crime has destroyed the applicant's peaceful enjoyment of the unit.
9. Participation in a "transitional" housing program: if the family has been selected to participate in a PHA-approved "transitional" housing program. The PHA approval for a "transitional" housing program will be based upon the Executive Director or Section 8 and Occupancy Manager's review of the supportive services plan.
10. "Continuously-Assisted" families (assisted within the last 180 days) whose assistance was terminated due to insufficient funding.

Date and time of receipt of a completed application will be the determining order within the "Local Preference" category and all ten local preferences will be weighted for consideration as specified in I. Order of Selection. Date and time of receipt of a completed application will be the determining order for all applicants outside of the "Local Preference" category with the exception of Treatment of Single Applicants.

## **Treatment of Single Applicants**

### **Singles Preference**

Single applicants who are elderly, disabled, or displaced will be given a selection priority over all "Other Single" applicants regardless of preference status. "Other Singles" denotes a one-person household in which the individual member is not elderly, disabled, or displaced by government action. Such applicants will be placed on the waiting list in accordance with any other preferences to which they are entitled, but they can not be selected for assistance before any one person elderly, disabled or displaced family regardless of local preferences.

All families with children and families who include an elderly person or a person with a disability (see 24 CFR 100.80) shall be given a selection priority over all other applicants.

## **D. INCOME TARGETING**

In accordance with the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998, each fiscal year the PHA will reserve a minimum of seventy-five percent of its Section 8 new admissions for families whose income does not exceed 30 percent of the area median income. HUD refers to these families as "extremely low-income families." The PHA will admit families who qualify under the Extremely Low Income limit to meet the income targeting requirement, regardless of preference.

The PHA's income targeting requirement does not apply to low income families continuously assisted as provided for under the 1937 Housing Act.

The PHA is also exempted from this requirement where the PHA is providing assistance to low income or moderate income families entitled to preservation assistance under the tenant-based program as a result of a mortgage prepayment or opt-out.

**E. INITIAL DETERMINATION OF LOCAL PREFERENCE QUALIFICATION**  
[24 CFR 982.207]

At the time of application, an applicant's entitlement to a local preference may be made on the following basis.

The PHA will verify all preference claims at the time they are made. The PHA will reverify a preference claim, if the PHA feels the family's circumstances have changed, at time of selection from the waiting list.

If the preference verification indicates that an applicant does not qualify for the preference, the applicant will be returned to the waiting list without the local preference and given an opportunity for a meeting.

If, at the time the family applied, the preference claim was the only reason for placement of the family on the list and the family cannot verify their eligibility for the preference as of the date of application, the family will be removed from the list.

**F. EXCEPTIONS FOR SPECIAL ADMISSIONS** [24 CFR 982.203, 982.54(d)(3)]

If HUD awards a PHA program funding that is targeted for specifically named families, the PHA will admit these families under a Special Admission procedure.

Special admissions families will be admitted outside of the regular waiting list process. They do not have to qualify for any preferences, nor are they required to be on the program waiting list. The PHA maintains separate records of these admissions.

The following are examples of types of program funding that may be designated by HUD for families living in a specified unit:

A family displaced because of demolition or disposition of a public or Indian housing project;

A family residing in a multifamily rental housing project when HUD sells, forecloses or demolishes the project;

For housing covered by the Low Income Housing Preservation and Resident Home-ownership Act of 1990;

A family residing in a project covered by a project-based Section 8 HAP contract at or near the end of the HAP contract term; and

A non-purchasing family residing in a HOPE 1 or HOPE 2 project.

**G. TARGETED FUNDING** [24 CFR 982.203]

When HUD awards special funding for certain family types, families who qualify are placed on the regular waiting list. When a specific type of funding becomes available, the waiting list is searched for the first available family meeting the targeted funding criteria.

Applicants who are admitted under targeted funding which are not identified as a Special Admission are identified by codes in the automated system. The PHA has the following "Targeted" Programs:

**Family Unification Program**

**H. PREFERENCE AND INCOME TARGETING ELIGIBILITY** [24 CFR 982.207]

**Change in Circumstances**

Changes in an applicant's circumstances while on the waiting list may affect the family's entitlement to a preference. Applicants are required to notify the PHA in writing when their circumstances change.

When an applicant claims an additional preference, s/he will be placed on the waiting list in the appropriate order specified in I. Order of Selection.

If the family's verified annual income, at final eligibility determination, does not fall under the Extremely Low Income limit and the family was selected for income targeting purposes before family(ies) with a higher preference, the family will be returned to the waiting list.

**Cross-Listing of Different Housing Programs and Section 8** [24 CFR 982.205(a)]

The PHA will not merge its waiting lists. However, if the Section 8 waiting list is open when the applicant is placed on the public housing program waiting list, the PHA must offer to place the family on its tenant-based assistance list.

If the waiting list for the PHA's public housing program is open at the time an applicant applies for Section 8, the PHA must offer to place the family on its waiting lists for the other programs.

**Other Housing Assistance** [24 CFR 982.205(b)]

Other housing assistance means a federal, State or local housing subsidy, as determined by HUD, including public housing.

The PHA may not take any of the following actions because an applicant has applied for, received, or refused other housing: [24 CFR 982.205(b)]

Refuse to list the applicant on the PHA waiting list for tenant-based assistance;

Deny any admission preference for which the applicant is currently qualified;

Change the applicant's place on the waiting list based on preference, date and time of application, or other factors affecting selection under the PHA selection policy; or

Remove the applicant from the waiting list.

However, the PHA may remove the applicant from the waiting list for tenant-based assistance if the PHA has offered the applicant assistance under the voucher program.

## **I. ORDER OF SELECTION** [24 CFR 982.207(e)]

The PHA's method for selecting applicants from a preference category leaves a clear audit trail that can be used to verify that each applicant has been selected in accordance with the method specified in the administrative plan.

### **Local Preferences**

Local preferences will be used to select families from the waiting list.

The PHA has selected the following system to apply local preferences:

1. 2 points: "Continuously-Assisted" families (assisted within the last 180 days) whose assistance was terminated only due to insufficient funding (including being over-leased);
2. 2 points: Applicant families who are current WVHA Public Housing residents that are being displaced due to planned or emergency remodel activities when they will be required to move within the next six months;
3. 1 point: All other Local Preferences.

Outside of the 2 point preferences, all other Local Preferences will be counted on an equal basis.

### **Among Applicants with Equal Preference Status**

Among applicants with equal preference status, the waiting list will be organized by date and time of application.

**J. FINAL VERIFICATION OF PREFERENCES** [24 CFR 982.207]

Preference information on applications will be updated as applicants are selected from the waiting list. At that time, the PHA will:

Obtain necessary verifications of preference at the interview and by third party verification.

**K. PREFERENCE DENIAL** [24 CFR 982.207]

If the PHA denies a preference, the PHA will notify the applicant in writing of the reasons why the preference was denied and offer the applicant an opportunity for a review with the Section 8 and Occupancy Manager. If the preference denial is upheld as a result of the meeting, or the applicant does not request a meeting, the applicant will be placed on the waiting list without benefit of the preference. Applicants may exercise other rights if they believe they have been discriminated against.

If the applicant falsifies documents or makes false statements in order to qualify for any preference, they will be removed from the waiting list.

**L. REMOVAL FROM WAITING LIST AND PURGING** [24 CFR 982.204(c)]

The Waiting List will be purged approximately once a year by a mailing to all applicants to ensure that the waiting list is current and accurate. The mailing will ask for confirmation of continued interest.

Any mailings to the applicant which require a response will state that failure to respond within 30 days will result in the applicant's name being dropped from the waiting list.

An extension of 30 additional days to respond will be granted, if requested and needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability.

If an applicant fails to respond to a mailing from the PHA, the applicant will be sent written notification and given seven days to contact the PHA. If they fail to respond within that time period, they will be removed from the waiting list.

If the applicant did not respond to the PHA request for information or updates because of a family member's disability and the applicant requests reasonable accommodation due to the disability, the PHA will reinstate the applicant in the family's former position on the waiting list.

If a letter is returned by the Post Office without a forwarding address, the applicant will be removed without further notice, and the envelope and letter will be maintained in the file.

If a letter is returned with a forwarding address, it will be re-mailed to the address indicated.

If an applicant is removed from the waiting list for failure to respond, they will not be entitled to reinstatement unless the Section 8 and Occupancy Manager determines there were circumstances beyond the person's control.

The PHA allows a grace period of seven days after completion of the purge. Applicants who respond during this grace period will be reinstated.

## Chapter 5

### SUBSIDY STANDARDS

[24 CFR 982.54(d)(9)]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

HUD guidelines require that PHA's establish subsidy standards for the determination of family unit size, and that such standards provide for a minimum commitment of subsidy while avoiding overcrowding. The standards used for the unit size selected by the family must be within the minimum unit size requirements of HUD's Housing Quality Standards. This Chapter explains the subsidy standards which will be used to determine the voucher size (family unit size) for various sized families when they are selected from the waiting list, as well as the PHA's procedures when a family's size changes, or a family selects a unit size that is different from the Voucher.

#### **A. DETERMINING FAMILY UNIT (VOUCHER) SIZE** [24 CFR 982.402]

The PHA does not determine who shares a bedroom/sleeping room, but there must be at least one person per bedroom on the Voucher. All standards in this section relate to the number of bedrooms on the Voucher, not the family's actual living arrangements. The PHA's subsidy standards for determining voucher size shall be applied in a manner consistent with Fair Housing guidelines. The unit size on the Voucher remains the same as long as the family composition remains the same, regardless of the actual unit size rented.

#### **GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING VOUCHER SIZE**

Voucher Size	Persons in Household	
	Minimum Number	Maximum Number
0 Bedroom	1	1
1 Bedroom	1	2
2 Bedrooms	2	6
3 Bedrooms	3	8
4 Bedrooms	4	10
5 Bedrooms	6	12
6 Bedrooms	8	14

**\* For subsidy standards, an adult is a person 18 years old or older.**

**\* One bedroom will generally be assigned for each two family members. The PHA will consider factors such as family characteristics including sex, age, or relationship. Consideration will also be given for medical reasons and the presence of a live-in aide.**

1. The subsidy size standard will permit at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two persons.

2. Spouses, or domestic partners, shall be assigned one bedroom.
3. Children of opposite sex shall be assigned one bedroom until one of the children reaches age ten (10).
4. The subsidy size standard shall not require persons of different generations to share a bedroom.
5. Families may request the subsidy size standard of a smaller size than is required by the above standards provided there is at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two persons.
6. Unborn children will not be included in the size of the household, except in the case of a single pregnant woman.
7. Foster children will be included in determining unit size only if they will be in the unit for more than six (6) months.
8. Live-in attendants will generally be provided a separate bedroom. No additional bedrooms are provided for the attendant's family. Live-in attendants must be identified, and approved by the PHA, prior to the issuance of any additional bedroom under the Subsidy Standard.
9. Space will be provided for a child who is away at school but who lives with the family during school recesses, only when the child and the child's income are included with the family.
10. Occasional, intermittent, multiple or rotating attendants do not meet the definition of a live-in attendant since "live-in" implies the attendant must reside with the family permanently. These types of attendants shall not be considered in the PHA's Voucher Subsidy Standards.

If a family, who is being issued a new Voucher or a Move Voucher, has children of the opposite sex who will be attaining the age for separate bedrooms within the initial search time of the Voucher (60 days), the PHA will issue the larger Voucher size at Briefing.

#### **B. EXCEPTIONS TO SUBSIDY STANDARDS** [24 CFR 982.403(a) & (b)]

The PHA shall grant exceptions from the subsidy standards if the family requests and the PHA determines that the exceptions are justified by the relationship, age, sex, health or disability of family members, or other individual circumstances. The PHA will grant an exception upon request as an accommodation for persons with disabilities. Circumstances may dictate a larger size than the subsidy standards permit when persons cannot share a bedroom because of a need, such as a:

- Verified medical or health reason; or

- Elderly persons or persons with disabilities who may require a live-in attendant.

If an exception is given (for a live-in attendant or other, a bedroom for medical equipment, etc.), the continued need for the exception will be verified at every inspection. In the event the exception is not being utilized for the purpose approved, the Voucher size will be reduced back in accordance with the PHA Subsidy Standards.

### **Request for Exceptions to Subsidy Standards**

- The family may request a larger sized voucher than indicated by the PHA's subsidy standards. Such request must be made in writing within 15 days of the PHA's determination of bedroom size. The request must explain the need or justification for a larger bedroom. Documentation verifying the need or justification will be required as appropriate.
- The PHA will not issue a larger voucher due to additions of family members other than by birth, adoption, marriage, or court-awarded custody.
- Requests based on health related reasons must be verified by a medical professional.

### **PHA Error**

If the PHA errs in the bedroom size designation, the family will be issued a Voucher of the appropriate size at the time of discovery, unless the family is already under a Voucher Lease. If the family is under a Voucher Lease, the correction will be made at the next annual recertification.

### **Changes for Applicants**

The voucher size is determined prior to the briefing by comparing the family composition to the PHA's subsidy standards. If an applicant requires a change in the voucher size, based on the requirements of the PHA subsidy standards, the above-referenced guidelines will apply.

### **Changes for Participants**

The members of the family residing in the unit must be approved by the PHA. The family must obtain approval of any additional family member **before** the new member occupies the unit except for additions by birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody, in which case the family must inform the PHA within **15** days. The above referenced guidelines will apply.

## **Underhoused Families**

If a unit does not meet HQS space standards due to an increase in family size, (unit too small), the PHA will issue a new voucher of the appropriate size and assist the family in locating a suitable unit. The PHA will also notify the family of the circumstances under which an exception will be granted, such as:

- If a family with a disability is underhoused in an accessible unit.
- If a family requires the additional bedroom because of a health problem which has been verified by the PHA.
- The PHA and family have been unable to locate a unit within 60 days.

### **C. UNIT SIZE SELECTED** [24 CFR 982.402(c)]

The family may select a different size dwelling unit than that listed on the Voucher. There are three criteria to consider:

Subsidy Limitation: The family unit size as determined for a family under the PHA's subsidy standard for a family assisted in the voucher program is based on the PHA's adopted payment standards. The payment standard for a family shall be the *lower of*:

1. The payment standard amount for the family unit size (aka Voucher size); or
2. The payment standard amount for the unit size (actual bedroom size) rented by the family.

Utility Allowance: The utility allowance used to calculate the gross rent is based on the actual size of the unit the family selects, regardless of the size authorized on the family's Voucher.

Housing Quality Standards: The standards allow two persons per living/sleeping room and permit maximum occupancy levels (assuming a living room is used as a living/sleeping area) as shown in the table below. The levels may be exceeded if a room in addition to bedrooms and living room is used for sleeping.

**\*HQS GUIDELINES FOR UNIT SIZE SELECTED**

<b>Unit Size</b>	<b>Maximum Number in Household</b>
0 Bedroom	1
1 Bedroom	4
2 Bedrooms	6
3 Bedrooms	8
4 Bedrooms	10
5 Bedrooms	12
6 Bedrooms	14

## Chapter 6

### FACTORS RELATED TO TOTAL TENANT PAYMENT AND FAMILY SHARE DETERMINATION

[24 CFR Part 5, Subparts E and F; 982.153, 982.551]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The PHA will use the methods as set forth in this Administrative Plan to verify and determine that family income at admission and at annual reexamination is correct. The accurate calculation of Annual Income and Adjusted Income will ensure that families are not paying more or less money for rent than their obligation under the Regulations.

This Chapter defines the allowable expenses and deductions to be subtracted from Annual Income and how the presence or absence of household members may affect the Total Tenant Payment (TTP). Income and TTP are calculated in accordance with 24 CFR Part 5, Subparts E and F, and further instructions set forth in HUD Notices and Memoranda. The formula for the calculation of TTP is specific and not subject to interpretation. The PHA's policies in this Chapter address those areas which allow the PHA discretion to define terms and to develop standards in order to assure consistent application of the various factors that relate to the determination of TTP.

#### **A. INCOME AND ALLOWANCES** [24 CFR 5.609]

Income: Includes all monetary amounts which are received on behalf of the family. For purposes of calculating the Total Tenant Payment, HUD defines what is to be calculated and what is to be excluded in the federal regulations. In accordance with this definition, all income which is not specifically excluded in the regulations is counted.

Annual Income is defined as the gross amount of income anticipated to be received by the family during the 12 months after certification or recertification. Gross income is the amount of income prior to any HUD allowable expenses or deductions, and does not include income which has been excluded by HUD. Annual income is used to determine whether or not applicants are within the applicable income limits.

Adjusted Income is defined as the Annual income minus any HUD allowable expenses and deductions.

HUD has five allowable deductions from Annual Income:

1. Dependent Allowance: \$480 each for family members (other than the head, co-head, or spouse) who are minors, and for family members who are 18 and older who are full-time students or who are disabled.

2. Elderly/Disabled Allowance: \$400 per family for families whose head or spouse is 62 or over or disabled.
3. Allowable Medical Expenses: Deducted for all family members of an eligible elderly/disabled family.
4. Child Care Expenses: Deducted for the care of children under age 13 when child care is necessary to allow an adult member to work, attend school, or actively seek employment.
5. Allowable Disability Assistance Expenses: Deducted for attendant care or auxiliary apparatus for persons with disabilities if needed to enable the individual or an adult family member to work.

**B. DISALLOWANCE OF EARNED INCOME FROM RENT DETERMINATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES** [24 CFR 5.617; 982.201(b)(3)]

The annual income for qualified families may not be increased as a result of increases in earned income of a family member who is a person with disabilities beginning on the date on which the increase in earned income begins and continuing for a cumulative 12-month period. After the disabled family receives 12 cumulative months of the full exclusion, annual income will include a phase-in of half the earned income excluded from annual income.

A family qualified for the earned income exclusion is a family that is receiving tenant-based rental assistance under the Housing Choice Voucher Program; and

- ¾ Whose annual income increases as a result of employment of a family member who is a person with disabilities and who was previously unemployed for one or more years prior to employment;
- ¾ Whose annual income increases as a result of increased earnings by a family member who is a person with disabilities during participation in any economic self-sufficiency or other job training program; or
- ¾ Whose annual income increases, as a result of new employment or increased earnings of a family member during or within six months after receiving assistance, benefits or services under any State program for TANF provided that the total amount over a six-month period is at least \$500. The qualifying TANF assistance may consist of any amount of monthly income maintenance, and/or at least \$500 in such TANF benefits and services as one-time payments, wage subsidies and transportation assistance.

The HUD definition of "previously unemployed" includes a person with disabilities who has earned in the previous 12 months no more than the equivalent earnings for working 10 hours per week for 50 weeks at the minimum wage. Minimum wage is the prevailing minimum wage in the State or locality.

The HUD definition of economic self-sufficiency program is: any program designed to encourage, assist, train or facilitate economic independence of assisted families or to provide work for such families. Such programs may include job training, employment counseling, work placement, basic skills training, education, English proficiency, workfare, financial or household management, apprenticeship, or any other program necessary to ready a participant to work (such as substance abuse or mental health treatment).

Qualifying increases are any earned income increases of a family member who is a person with disabilities during participation in an economic self-sufficiency or job training program and not increases that occur after participation, unless the training provides assistance, training or mentoring after employment.

The amount that is subject to the disallowance is the amount of incremental increase in income of a family member who is a person with disabilities. The incremental increase in income is calculated by comparing the amount of the disabled family member's income before the beginning of qualifying employment or increase in earned income to the amount of such income after the beginning of employment or increase in earned income.

### **Initial Twelve-Month Exclusion**

During the cumulative 12-month period beginning on the date a member who is a person with disabilities of a qualified family is first employed or the family first experiences an increase in annual income attributable to employment, the PHA will exclude from annual income of a qualified family any increase in income of the family member who is a person with disabilities as a result of employment over the prior income of that family member.

### **Second Twelve-Month Exclusion and Phase-in**

During the second cumulative 12-month period after the expiration of the initial cumulative 12-month period referred to above, the PHA must exclude from annual income of a qualified family 50 percent of any increase in income of a family member who is a person with disabilities as a result of employment over income of that family member prior to the beginning of such employment.

### **Maximum Four Year Disallowance**

The earned income disallowance is limited to a lifetime 48-month period for each family member who is a person with disabilities. For each family member who is a person with

disabilities, the disallowance only applies for a maximum of 12 months of full exclusion of incremental increase, and a maximum of 12 months of phase-in exclusion during the 48-month period starting from the date of the initial exclusion.

If the period of increased income does not last for 12 consecutive months, the disallowance period may be resumed at any time within the 48-month period, and continued until the disallowance has been applied for a total of 12 months of each disallowance (the initial 12-month full exclusion and the second 12-month phase-in exclusion).

No earned income disallowance will be applied after the 48-month period following the initial date the exclusion was applied.

### **Applicability to Child Care Expense Deductions**

The amount deducted for child care necessary to permit employment shall not exceed the amount of employment income that is included in annual income. Therefore, for families entitled to the earned income disallowance, the amounts of the full and phase-in exclusions from income shall not be used in determining the cap for child care deductions.

### **Tracking the Earned Income Exclusion**

The earned income exclusion will be reported on the HUD 50058 form. Documentation will be included in the family's file to show the reason for the reduced increase in rent.

Such documentation will include:

Date the increase in earned income was reported by the family

Name of the family member whose earned income increased

Reason (new employment, participation in job training program, within 6 months after receiving TANF) for the increase in earned income

Amount of the increase in earned income (amount to be excluded)

Date the increase in income is first excluded from annual income

Date(s) earned income ended and resumed during the initial cumulative 12-month period of exclusion (if any)

Date the family member has received a total of 12 months of the initial exclusion

Date the 12-month phase-in period began

Date(s) earned income ended and resumed during the second cumulative 12-month period (phase-in) of exclusion (if any)

Date the family member has received a total of 12 months of the phase-in exclusion

Ending date of the maximum 48-month (four year) disallowance period (48 months from the date of the initial earned income disallowance)

The PHA will maintain a tracking system to ensure correct application of the earned income disallowance.

### **Inapplicability to Admission**

The earned income disallowance is only applied to determine the annual income of families who are participants in the Housing Choice Voucher Program, and therefore does not apply for purposes of admission to the program (including the determination of income eligibility or any income targeting that may be applicable).

## **C. MINIMUM RENT** [24 CFR 5.630]

### **Minimum Rent**

"Minimum rent" is \$50.00. Minimum rent refers to the Minimum Total Tenant Payment and includes the combined amount a family pays towards rent and/or utilities when it is applied.

### **Hardship Requests for an Exception to Minimum Rent**

The PHA recognizes that in some circumstances even the minimum rent may create a financial hardship for families. The PHA will review all relevant circumstances brought to the PHA's attention regarding financial hardship as it applies to the minimum rent. The following section states the PHA's procedures and policies in regard to minimum rent financial hardship as set forth by the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998. HUD has defined circumstances under which a hardship could be claimed. (24 CFR 5.630)

### **Criteria for Hardship Exception**

In order for a family to qualify for a hardship exception the family's circumstances must fall under one of the following HUD hardship criteria:

1. The family has lost eligibility or is awaiting an eligibility determination for Federal, State, or local assistance, including a family with a member who

is a noncitizen lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act, and who would be entitled to public benefits but for Title IV of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996. Loss of TANF due to sanctions will not be considered under this provision as a reason for a hardship exception.

2. The family would be evicted as a result of the imposition of the minimum rent requirement;
3. The income of the family has decreased because of changed circumstances, including loss of employment, death in the family, or other circumstances as determined by the PHA or HUD.

### **PHA Notification to Families of Right to Hardship Exception**

The PHA will notify all families subject to minimum rents of their right to request a minimum rent hardship exception. "Subject to minimum rent" means the minimum rent was the greatest figure in the calculation of the greatest of 30% of monthly adjusted income, 10% of monthly income, minimum rent or welfare rent.

The notice of rent change includes a statement regarding the family's right to request a hardship exception and advises the family to request the form from the caseworker. A copy of this notice is kept in the family's file.

The PHA notification will advise families that hardship exception determinations are subject to PHA review and hearing procedures.

The PHA will review all family requests for exception from the minimum rent due to financial hardships.

All requests for minimum rent hardship exceptions are required to be in writing.

The PHA will use its standard verification procedures to verify circumstances which have resulted in financial hardship.

Requests for minimum rent exception must include a statement of the family hardship that qualify the family for an exception.

### **Suspension of Minimum Rent**

The PHA will grant the minimum rent exception to all families who request it, effective the first of the following month.

The minimum rent will be suspended until the PHA determines whether the hardship is:

Covered by statute

## Temporary or long term

"Suspension" means that the PHA must not use the minimum rent calculation until the PHA has made this decision.

During the minimum rent suspension period, the family will not be required to pay a minimum rent and the housing assistance payment will be increased accordingly.

If the PHA determines that the minimum rent hardship exception is not covered by statute, the PHA will impose a minimum rent retroactive from the time of suspension.

### **Temporary Hardship**

If the PHA determines that the hardship is temporary, a minimum rent will not be imposed for a period of up to 90 days from the date of the family's request. At the end of the temporary suspension period, a minimum rent will be imposed retroactively to the time of suspension.

The PHA will offer a repayment agreement to the family for any such rent not paid during the temporary hardship period. (See "Owner and Family Debts to the PHA" chapter for Repayment agreement policy).

### **Long-Term Duration Hardships**

If the PHA determines that there is a qualifying long-term financial hardship, the PHA must exempt the family from the minimum rent requirements for as long as the hardship continues. The exemption from minimum rent shall apply from the first day of the month following the family's request for exemption.

### **Retroactive Determination**

The PHA will reimburse the family for any minimum rent charges which took effect after October 21, 1998 that qualified for one of the mandatory exceptions.

If the family is owed a retroactive payment, the PHA will provide reimbursement in the form of a cash refund to the family. The PHA's definition of a cash refund is a check made out to the family.

## **D. DEFINITION OF TEMPORARILY / PERMANENTLY ABSENT**

[24 CFR 982.54(d)(10), 982.551]

The PHA must compute all applicable income of every family member who is on the lease, including those who are temporarily absent. In addition, the PHA must count the income of the spouse or the head of the household if that person is temporarily absent, even if that person is not on the lease.

"Temporarily absent" is defined as away from the unit for more than 30 days.

Income of persons permanently absent will not be counted. If the spouse is temporarily absent and in the military, all military pay and allowances (except hazardous duty pay when exposed to hostile fire and any other exceptions to military pay HUD may define) is counted as income.

It is the responsibility of the head of household to report changes in family composition. The PHA will evaluate absences from the unit using this policy.

### **Absence of Any Member**

Any member of the household will be considered permanently absent if s/he is away from the unit for 60 days in a 12 month period, except as otherwise provided in this Chapter.

### **Absence due to Medical Reasons**

If any family member leaves the household to enter a facility such as hospital, nursing home, or rehabilitation center, the PHA will seek advice from a reliable qualified source as to the likelihood and timing of their return. If the verification indicates that the family member will be permanently confined to a nursing home, the family member will be considered permanently absent. If the verification indicates that the family member will return in less than 180 consecutive days, the family member will not be considered permanently absent.

If the person who is determined to be permanently absent is the sole member of the household, assistance will be terminated in accordance with the PHA's "Absence of Entire Family" policy.

### **Absence Due to Full-time Student Status**

Full time students who attend school away from the home will be treated in the following manner:

A student (other than head of household or spouse) who attends school away from home but lives with the family during school recesses may, at the family's choice, be considered either temporarily or permanently absent. If the family decides that the member is permanently absent, income of that member will not be included in total household income, the member will not be included on the lease, and the member will not be included for determination of Voucher size.

### **Absence due to Incarceration**

If the sole member is incarcerated for more than 60 consecutive days, s/he will be considered permanently absent. Any member of the household, other than the sole

member, will be considered permanently absent if s/he is incarcerated for 60 days in a twelve month period.

The PHA will determine if the reason for incarceration is for drug-related or violent criminal activity. If it is determined to be for drug-related or violent criminal activity, the family may be terminated from assistance.

### **Absence of Children due to Placement in Foster Care**

If the family includes a child or children temporarily absent from the home due to placement in foster care, the PHA will determine from the appropriate agency when the child/children will likely be returned to the home.

If the time period is to be greater than six (6) months from the date of removal of the child/ren, the Voucher size will be reduced. If all children are removed from the home permanently, the voucher size will be reduced in accordance with the PHA's subsidy standards.

### **Absence of Entire Family**

These policy guidelines address situations when the family is absent from the unit, but has not moved out of the unit. In cases where the family has moved out of the unit, the PHA will terminate assistance in accordance with appropriate termination procedures contained in this Plan.

Families are required both to notify the PHA before they move out of a unit and to give the PHA information about any family absence from the unit.

Families must notify the PHA if they are going to be absent from the unit for more than 30 consecutive days.

If the entire family is absent from the assisted unit for more than 60 consecutive days, the unit will be considered to be vacated and the assistance will be terminated.

If it is determined that the family is absent from the unit for more than 30 days without approval of the owner and the PHA, the PHA will not continue assistance payments and the family will lose their Voucher.

HUD regulations require the PHA to terminate assistance if the entire family is absent from the unit for a period of more than 180 consecutive calendar days.

"Absence" means that no family member is residing in the unit.

A person with a disability may request an extension of time as an accommodation, provided that the extension does not go beyond the HUD-allowed 180 consecutive calendar days limit.

If the absence which resulted in termination of assistance was due to a person's disability, and the PHA can verify that the person was unable to notify the PHA in accordance with the family's responsibilities, and if funding is available, the PHA may reinstate the family as an accommodation if requested by the family, as long as the period was within 180 days.

### **Caretaker for Children**

If neither parent remains in the household and the appropriate agency has determined that another adult is to be brought into the assisted unit to care for the children for an indefinite period, the PHA will treat that adult as a visitor for the first 30 days.

If by the end of that period, court-awarded custody or legal guardianship has been awarded to the caretaker, the Voucher will be transferred to the caretaker.

If the appropriate agency cannot confirm the guardianship status of the caretaker, the PHA will review the status at weekly intervals.

If custody or legal guardianship has not been awarded by the court, but the action is in process, the PHA will secure verification from social services staff or the attorney as to the status.

The PHA will transfer the voucher to the caretaker, in the absence of a court order, if the caretaker has been in the unit for more than 60 days/months and it is reasonable to expect that custody will be granted. When the PHA approves a person to reside in the unit as caretaker for the child/ren, the income should be counted pending a final disposition. The PHA will work with the appropriate service agencies and the landlord to provide a smooth transition in these cases. If a member of the household is subject to a court order that restricts him/her from the home for more than three months, the person will be considered permanently absent.

## **Visitors**

Any adult not included on the HUD 50058 who has been in the unit more than 14 consecutive days without PHA approval, or a total of 14 days in a 12-month period, will be considered to be living in the unit as an unauthorized household member.

Absence of evidence of any other address will be considered verification that the visitor is a member of the household.

Statements from neighbors and/or the landlord will be considered in making the determination.

Use of the unit address as the visitor's current residence for any purpose, including receipt of mail, that is not explicitly temporary shall be construed as permanent residence.

The burden of proof that the individual is a visitor rests on the family. In the absence of such proof, the individual will be considered an unauthorized member of the household and the PHA will terminate assistance since prior approval was not requested for the addition to the household.

Minors and college students who were part of the family but who now live away from home during the school year and are no longer on the lease may visit for up to 30 days per year without being considered a member of the household.

In a joint custody arrangement, if the minor is in the household less than 180 days per year, the minor will be considered to be an eligible visitor and not a family member.

## **Reporting Additions to Owner and PHA**

Reporting changes in household composition to the PHA is both a HUD and a PHA requirement.

The family obligations require the family to request PHA approval to add any other family member as an occupant of the unit and to inform the PHA of the birth, adoption or court-awarded custody of a child. The family must request prior approval of additional household members in writing. If any new family member is added, the income of the additional member will be included in the family income as applicable under HUD regulations.

If the family does not obtain prior written approval from the PHA and the owner, any person the family has permitted to move in will be considered an unauthorized household member. **This will be grounds for termination of the family's assistance.**

An interim reexamination will be conducted for any additions to the household.

In addition, the lease may require the family to obtain prior written approval from the owner when there are changes in family composition other than birth, adoption or court awarded custody.

### **Reporting Absences to the PHA**

Reporting changes in household composition is both a HUD and a PHA requirement.

If a family member leaves the household, the family must report this change to the PHA, in writing, within 30 days of the change and certify as to whether the member is temporarily absent or permanently absent.

The PHA will conduct an interim evaluation for changes which affect the Total Tenant Payment in accordance with the interim policy.

### **E. AVERAGING INCOME**

If, at the time of admission or at any subsequent re-examination, it is not feasible to anticipate a level of income over the next 12 month period, the income anticipated for a shorter period may be annualized. (Example: family is receiving unemployment and even though the unemployment claim will not go for a full 12 month period, the weekly benefit will be anticipated for the full 52 weeks in a 12 month period. The family will then need to request an Interim recertification when their unemployment stops.)

Those families, who work at seasonal employment and may or may not collect unemployment for part of the year, will have their anticipated annual income based upon the prior year's income according to their federal income tax records and/or the associated W-2's, 1099 forms, etc. Interim recertifications will not be made based upon the layoff of seasonal workers as the family's annual income has already taken those layoff periods into account.

If the family does not do seasonal work and has no income, they will be required to complete quarterly certifications until they have a stable income source.

If there are bonuses or overtime which the employer cannot anticipate for the next twelve months, bonuses and overtime received the previous year will be used.

### **E. MINIMUM INCOME**

There is no minimum income requirement. Families who report zero income are required to complete a written certification every quarter until they have reported a stable source of income. This certification will require the family to provide information regarding the means of basic subsistence such as food, utilities, transportation, etc.

**Once the \$0 Income Status family begins to receive income, this income source MUST be reported within 30 days of first receiving income.**

**G. INCOME OF PERSON PERMANENTLY CONFINED TO NURSING HOME**

[24 CFR 982.54(d)(10)]

If a family member is permanently confined to a hospital or nursing home and there is a family member left in the household, the PHA will allow the family to choose to:

1. Either remove the member that is confined to a hospital or nursing home from the family composition and remove that member's income and any medical deductions that were associated with that member; or
2. Include the member in the family and include the income of the person permanently confined to the nursing home and give the family the medical deductions allowable on behalf of the person in the nursing home.

**H. REGULAR CONTRIBUTIONS AND GIFTS** [24 CFR 5.609]

Regular contributions and gifts received from persons outside the household are counted as income for calculation of the Total Tenant Payment.

Any contribution or gift received every three months or more frequently will be considered a "regular" contribution or gift, unless the amount is less than \$100 per year. This includes rent and utility payments made on behalf of the family and other cash or non-cash contributions provided on a regular basis. It does not include casual contributions or sporadic gifts. (See "Verification Procedures" chapter for further definition.)

If the family's expenses exceed its known income, the PHA will inquire of the family regarding contributions and gifts.

**I. ALIMONY AND CHILD SUPPORT** [24 CFR 5.609]

Regular alimony and child support payments are counted as income for calculation of Total Tenant Payment. It is the family's responsibility to supply a certified copy of the divorce decree or any court action regarding child support. If the amount of child support or alimony received is less than the amount awarded by the court, the PHA will use the amount awarded by the court unless the family can verify that they are not receiving the full amount. The PHA will accept verification that the family is receiving an amount less than the award if:

1. The PHA receives verification from the agency responsible for enforcement or collection that covers the past twelve months to document the amount received by the family; or
2. The family furnishes documentation of child support or alimony collection action filed through a child support enforcement/collection agency, or has filed an enforcement or collection action through an attorney. The PHA

will also have to receive documentation of the amount actually received over the past twelve months or a minimum of three months which would then be annualized to determine the 12 month anticipated income.

#### **J. LUMP-SUM RECEIPTS** [24 CFR 5.609]

Lump-sum additions to Family assets, such as inheritances, insurance payments (including payments under health and accident insurance and worker's compensation), capital gains, and settlement for personal or property losses, are not included in income but may be included in assets. Lump-sum payments caused by delays in processing periodic payments such as unemployment or welfare assistance are counted as income. Lump sum payments from Social Security or SSI are excluded from income, but any amount remaining will be considered an asset. Deferred periodic payments which have accumulated due to a dispute will be treated the same as periodic payments which are deferred due to delays in processing.

In order to determine amount of retroactive tenant rent that the family owes as a result of the lump sum receipt:

The PHA will calculate retroactively if the receipt was not reported within 30 days if the family was on zero income. If the family had other income on which their rent was determined, they are not required to report receipt of additional income until the next annual recertification. If the family fails to report the receipt of the additional income at the next annual recertification, action could be taken to terminate the family from assistance for misrepresentation of income.

#### **Retroactive Calculation Methodology**

The PHA will go back to the date the lump-sum payment was received and would have been included in the family's income for an Interim recertification. The family must pay this "retroactive" amount to the PHA in a lump sum or enter into an acceptable Repayment Agreement if the family is unable to pay in a lump sum. The standard requirements for the Repayment Agreement are that the family must make a minimum down payment, as determined by the PHA, and then monthly payments that would provide for a full repayment of amounts owed within a twelve month period.

#### **Attorney Fees**

The family's attorney fees may be deducted from lump-sum payments when computing annual income if the attorney's efforts have recovered a lump-sum compensation, and the recovery paid to the family does not include an additional amount in full satisfaction of the attorney fees.

**K. CONTRIBUTIONS TO RETIREMENT FUNDS - ASSETS** [24 CFR 5.603(d)]

Contributions to company retirement/pension funds are handled as follows:

While an individual is employed, count as assets only amounts the family can withdraw without retiring or terminating employment.

After retirement or termination of employment, count any amount the employee elects to receive as a lump sum.

**L. ASSETS DISPOSED OF FOR LESS THAN FAIR MARKET VALUE**  
[24 CFR 5.603(d)(3)]

The PHA must count assets disposed of for less than fair market value during the two years preceding certification or reexamination. The PHA will count the difference between the market value and the actual payment received in calculating total assets.

Assets disposed of as a result of foreclosure or bankruptcy are not considered to be assets disposed of for less than fair market value. Assets disposed of as a result of a divorce or separation are not considered to be assets disposed of for less than fair market value.

The PHA's minimum threshold for counting assets disposed of for less than Fair Market value is \$500.00. If the total value of assets disposed of within a one-year period is less than \$500.00, they will not be considered an asset.

**M. CHILD CARE EXPENSES** [24 CFR 5.603]

Child care expenses for children under 13 may be deducted from annual income if they enable an adult to work or attend school full time, or to actively seek employment.

In the case of a child attending private school, only after-hours care can be counted as child care expenses.

Allowability of deductions for child care expenses is based on the following guidelines:

**Child care to work (or look for work):** The maximum child care expense allowed must be less than the amount earned by the person enabled to work which is included in the family's annual income. The "person enabled to work" will be the adult member of the household who earns the least amount of income from working.

**Child care for school:** The number of hours claimed for child care may not exceed the number of hours the family member is attending school, including reasonable travel time to and from school.

#### **N. MEDICAL EXPENSES** [24 CFR 5.609(a)(2), 5.603]

Anticipating medical expenses for the following twelve month period will be based upon the past twelve months experience for those eligible families, unless they can provide clear documentation of an expense the family will have during the next twelve months that is of a different type than previously experienced. If such an anticipated expense was included in the last recertification, it will not again be used in a subsequent recertification. Such expenses will only be used for one annual recertification and will not be duplicated, regardless of whether the family still owes money on the medical item.

When it is unclear in the HUD rules as to whether or not to allow an item as a medical expense, IRS Publication 502 will be used as a guide. Travel expenses for medical reasons will be allowed in the manner contained in IRS Publication 502.

Nonprescription medicines must be doctor-recommended in order to be considered a medical expense. Nonprescription medicines will be counted toward medical expenses for families who qualify if the family furnishes legible receipts.

#### **O. PRORATION OF ASSISTANCE FOR "MIXED" FAMILIES** [24 CFR 5.520]

##### **Applicability**

Proration of assistance must be offered to any "mixed" applicant or participant family. A "mixed" family is one that includes at least one U.S. citizen or eligible immigrant and any number of ineligible members.

##### **Prorated Assistance Calculation**

Prorated assistance is calculated by determining the amount of assistance payable if all family members were eligible and multiplying by the percent of the family members who actually are eligible. Calculations for each housing program are performed on the HUD 50058 form.

**P. INCOME CHANGES RESULTING FROM WELFARE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

The PHA will not reduce the rental contribution for families whose welfare assistance is reduced specifically because of:

fraud by a family member in connection with the welfare program; or  
failure to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program; or  
noncompliance with a work activities requirement

However, the PHA will reduce the rental contribution if the welfare assistance reduction is a result of:

The expiration of a lifetime time limit on receiving benefits; or

A situation where a family member has not complied with other welfare agency requirements; or

A situation where a family member has complied with welfare agency economic self-sufficiency or work activities requirements but cannot or has not obtained employment, such as the family member has complied with welfare program requirements, but the durational time limit, such as a cap on the length of time a family can receive benefits, causes the family to lose their welfare benefits.

Imputed welfare income is the amount of annual income not actually received by a family as a result of a specified welfare benefit reduction that is included in the family's income for rental contribution.

Imputed welfare income is not included in annual income if the family was not an assisted resident at the time of sanction.

The amount of imputed welfare income is offset by the amount of additional income a family receives that begins after the sanction was imposed. When additional income is at least equal to the imputed welfare income, the imputed welfare income is reduced to zero.

**Verification Before Denying a Request to Reduce Rent**

The PHA will obtain verification from the welfare agency stating that the family's benefits have been reduced for fraud or noncompliance with economic self-sufficiency or work activities requirements before denying the family's request for rent reduction.

The welfare agency, at the request of the PHA, will inform the PHA of:

amount and term of specified welfare benefit reduction for the family;

reason for the reduction; and

subsequent changes in term or amount of reduction.

### **Cooperation Agreements**

The PHA has a written cooperation agreement in place with the local welfare agency which assists the PHA in obtaining the necessary information regarding welfare sanctions. The PHA has taken a proactive approach to creating an effective working relationship between the PHA and the local welfare agency for the purpose of targeting economic self-sufficiency programs throughout the community that are available to Section 8 and public housing residents.

### **Q. UTILITY ALLOWANCE AND UTILITY REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENTS**

[24 CFR 982.153, 982.517]

The same Utility Allowance Schedule is used for all tenant-based programs.

The utility allowance is intended to cover the cost of utilities not included in the rent. The allowance is based on the typical cost of utilities and services paid by energy-conservative households that occupy housing of similar size and type in the same locality. Allowances are not based on an individual family's actual energy consumption.

The PHA's utility allowance schedule, and the utility allowance for an individual family, must include the utilities and services that are necessary in the locality to provide housing that complies with the housing quality standards.

The PHA may not provide any allowance for non-essential utility costs, such as costs of cable or satellite television.

The PHA must classify utilities in the utility allowance schedule according to the following general categories: space heating, cooking, water heating, water, sewer, trash collection; other electric, refrigerator (cost of tenant-supplied refrigerator), range (cost of tenant-supplied range); and other specified services.

An allowance for tenant-paid air conditioning will be provided in those cases where the majority of housing units in the market have central air conditioning or are wired for tenant installed air conditioners [24 CFR 982.517]. Polk County, Oregon does not qualify for an allowance for air conditioners based upon this provision and only would be provided due to a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability.

The PHA will review the utility allowance schedule annually. If the review finds a utility rate has changed by 10 percent or more since the last revision of the utility allowance schedule, the schedule will be revised to reflect the new rate. Revised utility allowances will be applied in a participant family's rent calculation at their next reexamination.

The approved utility allowance schedule will be provided to families upon request when the proposed area and unit type is known that the family is seeking. The utility allowance is based on the actual unit size selected.

Where families provide their own range and refrigerator, the PHA will establish an allowance adequate for the family to purchase or rent a range or refrigerator, even if the family already owns either appliance. Allowances for ranges and refrigerators will be based on the lesser of the cost of leasing or purchasing the appropriate appliance over the standard life duration for the appliance. The standard life of a range used is 15 years. The standard life of a refrigerator used is 15 years.

Where the calculation on the HUD 50058 results in a utility reimbursement payment due the family [24 CFR 982.514(b)], the PHA will provide a utility reimbursement payment for the family each month. The check will be made out directly to the tenant, unless the tenant completes a form to designate the payment to go directly to the utility supplier. If the family chooses to have the payment go directly to the utility supplier, the family will be informed of the amount paid on their behalf to the utility supplier.

## Chapter 7

### VERIFICATION PROCEDURES

[24 CFR Part 5, Subparts B, D, E and F; 24 CFR 982.158; 24 CFR 5.617]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

HUD regulations require that the factors of eligibility and Total Tenant Payment/Family Share be verified by the PHA. PHA staff will obtain written verification from independent sources whenever possible and will document tenant files whenever third party verifications are not possible as to why third party verification was impossible to obtain.

Applicants and program participants must provide true and complete information to the PHA whenever information is requested. The PHA's verification requirements are designed to maintain program integrity. This chapter explains the PHA's procedures and standards for verification of preferences, income, assets, allowable deductions, family status, and changes in family composition. The PHA will obtain proper authorization from the family before requesting information from independent sources.

#### **A. METHODS OF VERIFICATION AND TIME ALLOWED** [24 CFR 982.516; 24 CFR 5.236; 24 CFR 5.233; PIH 2010-19]

The PHA will verify information through the five methods of verification acceptable to HUD in the following order:

The PHA will verify information through the six (6) methods of verification acceptable to HUD in the following mandatory order:

1. Upfront Income Verification (UIV) using HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System
2. Upfront Income Verification (UIV) using non-HUD systems
3. Written Third-Party Verification (generated by a third-party source)
4. Written Third-Party Verification Form
5. Oral Third-Party Verification
6. Tenant Declaration

The PHA will allow two weeks (14 days) for return of Level 3 to Level 4 third-party verifications and one week (7 days) to obtain other types of verifications before going to the next method. The PHA will document the file as to why Upfront Income Verification systems and/or third party written verification was not used using the appropriate RIM (Rental Income Monitoring) slip(s).

The PHA will make at least two (2) attempts to obtain these types of third-party written verifications before dropping to a lower version of verification. For example, the employee will send the first third-party verification request, wait seven (7) days and then will send a follow-up request and wait seven (7) more days. After the expiration of the 14 days, the PHA will then take steps to obtain the applicable lower levels of verifications available.

For applicants, verifications may not be more than 60 days old at the time of Voucher issuance. For participants, verifications will be valid for 60 days from date of receipt.

### **Third-Party Written Verification**

Third-party verification is used to verify information directly with the source. In the event third-party written verification cannot be obtained through non-HUD UIV systems, third-party written verification forms will be sent and returned via first class mail. The family will be required to sign an authorization for the information source to release the specified information.

Verifications received electronically directly from the source will be considered third party written verifications. Verifications faxed by the PHA direct to the third party and faxed by the third party directly back to the PHA will also be considered third party written verifications, provided that the family had no access to the verification document.

The PHA will accept verifications in the form of computerized printouts, delivered by the family, from the following sources:

1. Social Security Administration
2. Unemployment Compensation Board
3. City or County Courts

### **Oral Third-Party Verification**

Oral third-party verification will be used when written third-party verification is delayed or not possible. When third-party oral verification is used, staff will be required to complete a RIM slip, noting with whom they spoke, the date of the conversation, and the facts provided. If oral third-party verification is not available, the PHA will compare the information to any documents provided by the Family. If provided by telephone, the PHA must originate the call.

### **Review of Documents**

In the event that third-party written or oral verification is unavailable, or the information has not been verified by the third party within two weeks (14 days), the PHA will annotate the file accordingly and utilize documents provided by the family as the primary source if the documents provide complete information.

All such documents, excluding government checks, will be photocopied and retained in the applicant/participant file. In cases where documents are viewed which cannot be photocopied, staff viewing the document(s) will complete a RIM Slip of document viewed or person contacted.

The PHA will accept the following documents from the family provided that the document is such that tampering would be easily noted:

1. Printed wage stubs
2. Computer print-outs from the employer

3. Signed letters (provided that the information is confirmed by phone)
4. Other documents noted in this Chapter as acceptable verification

The PHA will accept faxed documents as long as there does not appear to be any alterations to the verification(s).

If third-party verification is received after documents have been accepted as provisional verification, and there is a discrepancy, the PHA will utilize the third party verification.

The PHA will not delay the processing of an application beyond 14 days because a third party information provider does not return the verification in a timely manner.

### **Self-Certification/Self-Declaration**

When verification cannot be made by third-party verification or review of documents, families will be required to submit a self-certification.

Self-certification means a notarized statement or affidavit to certify income or expenses that he/she has reported.

### **B. RELEASE OF INFORMATION** [24 CFR 5.230]

Adult family members will be required to sign the HUD 9886 Release of Information/Privacy Act form.

In addition, family members will be required to sign the BASIC AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION as well as any specific authorization forms when information is needed that is not covered by the HUD 9886 Authorization for Release of Information/Privacy Act Notice.

Copies of the two standard release forms are included in both the program applications packets as well as the standard Recertification Packet.

Family refusal to cooperate with the HUD prescribed verification system will result in denial of admission or termination of assistance because it is a family obligation to supply any information and to sign consent forms requested by the PHA or HUD.

### **C. COMPUTER MATCHING**

For some time, HUD has conducted a computer matching initiative to independently verify resident income. HUD can access income information and compare it to information submitted by PHAs on the 50058 form. HUD can disclose Social Security information to PHAs, but is precluded by law from disclosing Federal tax return data to PHAs. If HUD receives information from Federal tax return data indicating a discrepancy in the income reported by the family, HUD will notify the family of the discrepancy. The family is required to disclose this information to the PHA (24 CFR 5.240). HUD's letter to the family will also notify the family that HUD has notified the PHA in writing that the family has been advised to contact the PHA. HUD will send the PHA a list of families who have received "income discrepancy" letters.

**D. ITEMS TO BE VERIFIED** [24 CFR 982.516]

All income not specifically excluded by the regulations.

Full-time student status including High School students who are 18 or over.

Current assets including assets disposed of for less than fair market value in preceding two years.

Child care expense where it allows an adult family member to be employed, or to actively seek employment or to further his/her education.

Total medical expenses of all family members in households whose head or spouse is elderly or disabled.

Disability assistance expenses to include only those costs associated with attendant care or auxiliary apparatus for a disabled member of the family, which allow an adult family member to be employed.

Disability status for determination of allowances or deductions.

U.S. citizenship/eligible immigrant status

Social security numbers for all family members who have been issued a social security number.

"Preference" status as stated in Chapter 4.

Familial status when needed for head, co-head or spouse definition.

Verification of Reduction in Benefits for Noncompliance:

The PHA will obtain third-party verification from the welfare agency stating that the family's benefits have been reduced for fraud or noncompliance prior to denying the family's request for rent reduction.

**E. VERIFICATION OF INCOME** [24 CFR 982.516, PIH2010-19 HA]

This section defines the methods the PHA will use to verify various types of income.

**Employment Income**

The PHA's Employment Verification Form request the employer to specify the:

Date Hired

Status of Employment, i.e. full-time, part-time, etc.

Number of Work Weeks/Year

Job Title and Amount/Frequency of pay

Average Hours per week worked

Estimated income from overtime, tips, bonus pay expected during next 12 months

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Access made available through the HUD-sponsored EIV On-Line System (when available). Check stubs or earning statements, which indicate the employee's gross pay, frequency of pay or year-to-date earnings will be used to compare against EIV print-outs when available. Check stubs or earning statements must be no older than 60 days from receipt and **MUST** be consecutive in nature. A minimum of two (2) check stubs must be used for comparison.
2. Written employment verification form completed by and mailed/faxed back from the employer.
3. Verbal employment verification received directly from the employer.
4. W-2 forms plus income tax return forms.
5. Notarized self-certifications or income tax returns signed by the family may be used for verifying self-employment income, or income from tips and other gratuities.
6. If, at any time, it is not feasible to anticipate a level of income over a 12-month period, the income anticipated for a shorter period may be annualized. Those families, who work at **seasonal employment** and may or may not collect unemployment compensation for part of the year, will have their anticipated annual income based upon the prior year's income according to their federal income tax records and/or associated W-2s, Form 1099s, etc. In these cases, these applicable tax records shall be considered appropriate verifications.

Applicants and program participants may be requested to sign an authorization for release of information from the Internal Revenue Service for further verification of income.

In cases where there are questions about the validity of information provided by the family, the PHA will require the most recent federal income tax statements.

Where doubt regarding income exists, a referral to IRS for confirmation will be made on a case-by-case basis.

## **Social Security. Pension. Supplementary Security Income (SSI). Disability Income**

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Access made available through the HUD-sponsored EIV On-Line System (when available).
2. Written pension benefit verification form completed by and mailed/faxed back from the employer.
3. SSA/pension award or benefit notification letter(s) prepared and signed by the providing agency. HUD standard for written third-party verification of Social Security benefits (other than EIV) would include an SSA benefit letter no older than 60 days of the PHA request date or within the PHA family interview date.
4. PHA may call SSA or pension provider, with the family on the line, to obtain current benefit information.
5. PHA may accept notarized statement or affidavit, from the family, that declares monthly Social Security or pension benefits.

**NOTE:** Photocopies of Social Security checks or bank statements are **NOT** acceptable forms of verifications for SS/SSI benefits because the dollar amount listed may not be the gross benefit amount.

## **Unemployment Compensation**

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Access made available through the HUD-sponsored EIV On-Line System or via other written agreements through the local unemployment collection agency.
2. Written verification completed by and received directly from the unemployment compensation agency.
3. PHA may review an original benefit notice or unemployment check stub(s) from the unemployment collection agency.
4. PHA may accept notarized statement or affidavit, from the family, that declares weekly unemployment benefits.
5. If, at any time, it is not feasible to anticipate a level of income over a 12-month period, the income anticipated for a shorter period may be annualized. Those families, who work at seasonal employment and may or may not collect unemployment compensation for part of the year, will have their anticipated annual income based upon the prior year's income according to their federal income tax records and/or associated W-2s, Form 1099s, etc. In these cases, these applicable tax records shall be considered appropriate verifications.

## **Welfare Payments or General Assistance**

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Access made available through the DHS On-Line Access System for TANF and other welfare-related benefits.
2. Written benefit verification completed by and received directly from the local social service agency.
3. PHA may call the local social service agency to obtain current benefit information.
4. PHA may review an original award notice or print-out from the local social service agency provided by the family.
5. PHA may accept notarized statement or affidavit, from the family, that declares monthly welfare benefits.

## **Alimony or Child Support Payments**

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Access made available through the State of Oregon Department of Justice Support Services Division On-Line Access System for Child Support.
2. Written benefit verification, completed by and received directly from either the Support Services or the Child Support/Alimony payer, specifying current monthly Child Support or Alimony benefits.
3. PHA may call Support Services or the Child Support/Alimony payer to obtain current benefit information.
4. PHA may review a copy of a separation agreement or a divorce/court decree stating amount and type of support and payment schedules. A print-out from Support Services will also suffice.
5. A notarized letter from the person paying the support.

If payments are irregular, the PHA will use the available verification and calculate an annualized benefit amount that will then be used to determine Annual Income.

## **Net Income from a Business**

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Written verification, completed by and received directly from sources identified by the family to obtain income information.
2. PHA may call the source to obtain current income information.
3. PHA may review and accept IRS and financial documents from prior years and use this information to anticipate the family's income for the next 12 months.

Acceptable methods of IRS verification include:

- A. IRS Form 1040, including:
  - Schedule C (Small Business)
  - Schedule E (Rental Property Income)
  - Schedule F (Farm Income)
4. Audited or unaudited financial statement(s) of the business.
5. Documents such as manifests, appointment books, cash books, bank statements, and receipts will be used as a guide for the prior six months (or lesser period if not in business for six months) to project income for the next 12 months. The family will be advised to maintain these documents in the future if they are not available.
6. Family's self-certification as to net income realized from the business during previous years.

### **Child Care Business**

If an applicant/participant is operating a licensed day care business, income will be verified as with any other business.

In the event the family is providing day care services, and being paid through DHS, the family shall provide as many copies of payment sheets for all customers as possible for the last 12 months. In the event a customer is paying a co-pay, the PHA shall obtain written income verification directly from the customer when possible. If necessary, verbal verification of co-pay will suffice.

If the applicant/participant is operating a "cash and carry" operation (which may or may not be licensed), the PHA will require written verification from each customer which indicates: name of person(s) whose child (children) is/are being cared for, phone number, number of hours child is being cared for, method of payment (check/cash), amount paid, and signature of person.

Where doubt regarding income exists, a referral to IRS for confirmation will be made on a case-by-case basis.

If income from child care services are terminated, a third-party verification will be sent to the parent whose child was cared for.

### **Recurring Gifts**

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Notarized statement, from income provider, stating the regularity (dates) and the amount of the financial gift.
2. Notarized statement, from the family, stating the regularity (dates) and the amount of the financial gift.

### **Athletic Scholarship Financial Aid (aid specifically meant for housing)**

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Written verification, from the registrar's office or other school official, detailing scholarship monies specifically meant for housing.

### **Zero (\$0) Income Status**

Families claiming to have no income will be required to submit quarterly certifications until such time as they obtain a regular source of income. Families claiming \$0 Income Status shall be required to report any increase in income within 30 days of the increase.

### **Full-time Student Status**

Only the first \$480 of the earned income of full time students, other than head, co-head, or spouse, will be counted towards family income.

Financial aid, scholarships and grants are not counted towards family income (Exception: college athletic scholarship monies specifically meant for housing).

Verification of full time student status includes:

1. Written verification from the registrar's office or other school official.
2. School records indicating enrollment for sufficient number of credits to be considered a full-time student by the educational institution.

## **F. INCOME FROM ASSETS** [24 CFR 982.516]

### **Savings Account Interest Income and Dividends**

If the PHA has documentation from the financial institution that the financial institution will charge the account holder for any verification provided directly by the financial institution, the PHA will not attempt the third party verification due to the charge to the account holder. The PHA will directly drop down to the other levels of verification primarily going to documents provided by the family.

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Copies of bank statements that are no older than 60 days reviewing current balance.
2. PHA verification forms completed by the financial institution.
3. Documents provided including broker's statements showing value of stocks or bonds and the earnings credited the family. Earnings can be obtained from current newspaper quotations or oral broker's verification. This will also include the actual review of passbook and/or checking account statements, CDs, etc. as long as it does not appear that alterations have been made and balances are within the specified verification timeframes.

4. The PHA may accept a notarized statement or affidavit to declare the balances of assets and income.

### **Interest Income from Mortgages or Similar Arrangements**

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. A letter from an accountant, attorney, real estate broker, the buyer, or a financial institution stating interest due for next 12 months. (A copy of the check paid by the buyer to the family is not sufficient unless a breakdown of interest and principal is shown.)
2. Amortization schedule showing interest for the 12 months following the effective date of the certification or recertification.

### **Net Rental Income from Property Owned by Family**

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. IRS Form 1040 with Schedule E (Rental Income).
2. Copies of latest rent receipts, leases, or other documentation of rent amounts.
3. Documentation of allowable operating expenses of the property: tax statements, insurance invoices, bills for reasonable maintenance and utilities, and bank statements or amortization schedules showing monthly interest expense.
4. Lessee's written statement verifying rent payments to the family and family's self-certification as to net income realized.

## **G. VERIFICATION OF ASSETS**

### **Family Assets**

The PHA will require the information necessary to determine the current cash value of the family's assets, (the net amount the family would receive if the asset were converted to cash).

If the PHA has documentation from the financial institution that the financial institution will charge the account holder for any verification provided directly by the financial institution, the PHA will not attempt the third party verification due to the charge to the account holder. The PHA will directly drop down to the other levels of verification primarily going to documents provided by the family. **As well, in cases where financial institutions cannot/will not provide third party verifications in a timely fashion, that is within one week (7 days) of request, the PHA may accept other forms of verifications.**

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Copies of bank statements that are no older than 60 days reviewing current balance.
2. PHA verification forms, letters, or documents from a financial institution or broker.
3. Documents provided including broker's statements showing value of stocks or bonds credited the family. This will also include the actual review of passbook and/or checking account statements, CDs, etc. as long as it does not appear that alterations have been made and balances are within the specified verification timeframes. Also included will be real estate tax statements if the approximate current market value can be deduced from assessment and copies of closing documents showing the selling price and the distribution of the sales proceeds.
4. PHA may call the financial institution to obtain the asset and income verifications.
5. Family's self-certification describing assets or cash held at the family's home or in safe deposit boxes.

**Assets Disposed of for Less than Fair Market Value (FMV) During Two Years Preceding Effective Date of Certification or Recertification**

For all Certifications and Recertifications, the PHA will obtain the Family's certification as to whether any member has disposed of assets for less than fair market value during the two years preceding the effective date of the certification or recertification.

If the family certifies that they have disposed of assets for less than fair market value, verification is required that shows: (a) all assets disposed of for less than FMV, (b) the date they were disposed of, (c) the amount the family received, and (d) the market value of the assets at the time of disposition. Third party verification will be obtained wherever possible.

**H. VERIFICATION OF ALLOWABLE DEDUCTIONS FROM INCOME**  
[24 CFR 982.516]

**Child Care Expenses** [24 CFR 5.611(a)(4)]

Child care expenses are defined as amounts anticipated to be paid, by the family, for the care of children under 13 years of age during the period for which annual income is computed, but only where such care is necessary to enable a family member to actively seek employment, be gainfully employed or to further his/her education and only to the extent such amounts are not reimbursed. In cases of child care necessary to permit employment, the amount deducted shall not exceed the amount of employment income that is included in annual income.

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Written verification from the person who receives the payments is required. If the child care provider is an individual, s/he must provide a statement of the amount they are charging the family for their services.
2. Verifications must specify the child care provider's name, address, telephone number, the names of the children cared for, the number of hours the child care occurs, the rate of pay, and the typical yearly amount paid, including school and vacation periods.
3. The PHA must also obtain the family's certification as to the purpose of the child care expenses as well as whether any of those payments have been or will be paid or reimbursed by outside sources.

**Medical Expenses** [24 CFR 5.611(a)(3)(i)]

Disabled or elderly families (Head or spouse is elderly or disabled) are entitled to a deduction for unreimbursed medical expenses. The allowable medical expense is that portion that exceeds three percent (3%) of annual income.

If the family is eligible for the medical expense deduction, the medical expenses of **ALL** family members may be counted.

Families who claim medical expenses will be required to certify as to whether or not any expense payments have been, or will be, reimbursed by an outside source.

All expense claims will be verified by one or more of the methods listed below:

- Written verification by a doctor, hospital or clinic personnel, dentist, pharmacist, of (a) the anticipated medical costs to be incurred by the family and regular payments due on medical bills; and (b) extent to which those expenses will be reimbursed by insurance or a government agency.
- Written confirmation by the insurance company or employer of health insurance premiums to be paid by the family.
- Written confirmation from the Social Security Administration of Medicare premiums to be paid by the family over the next 12 months. This can be obtained via the standard EIV Statement or other applicable award letter.

For attendant care:

A reliable, knowledgeable professional's certification that the assistance of an attendant is necessary as a medical expense and a projection of the number of hours the care is needed for calculation purposes.

Attendant's written confirmation of hours of care provided and amount and frequency of payments received from the family or agency (or copies of

canceled checks the family used to make those payments) or stubs from the agency providing the services.

- Receipts, canceled checks, or pay stubs that verify medical costs and insurance expenses likely to be incurred in the next 12 months.
- Copies of payment agreements or most recent invoice that verify payments made on outstanding medical bills that will continue over all or part of the next 12 months.
- Receipts or other record of medical expenses incurred during the past 12 months that can be used to anticipate future medical expenses. PHA may use this approach for "general medical expenses" such as non-prescription drugs and regular visits to doctors or dentists, but not for one time, nonrecurring expenses from the previous year.

The PHA will use applicable definitions and mileage rates set forth in the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Publication 502 (or any applicable IRS update notifications) for verification of the cost of transportation directly related to medical treatment.

**Assistance to Persons with Disabilities** [24 CFR 5.611(a)(3)(ii)]

Families are entitled to a deduction for unreimbursed medical expenses to cover care attendants and auxiliary apparatus expenses for each member of the family who is a person with a disability, to the extent necessary to enable any member of the family (including the family member who is a person with a disability) to be employed. This deduction may not exceed the earned income received by family members who are 18 years of age or older, and who are able to work because of such attendant care or auxiliary apparatus. The allowable disability assistance expense is that portion that exceeds three percent (3%) of annual income.

In All cases, verifications will include:

- Written certification from a reliable, knowledgeable professional that the person with disabilities requires the services of an attendant and/or the use of auxiliary apparatus to permit him/her to be employed or to function sufficiently independently to enable another family member to be employed.

Families who claim disability expenses will be required to certify as to whether or not any expense payments have been, or will be, reimbursed by an outside source

Attendant Care:

Attendant's written certification of amount received from the family, frequency of receipt, and hours of care provided.

Certification of family and attendant and/or copies of canceled checks family used to make payments.

**Auxiliary Apparatus:**

Receipts for purchases or proof of monthly payments and maintenance expenses for auxiliary apparatus.

In the case where the person with disabilities is employed, a statement from the employer that the auxiliary apparatus is necessary for employment.

**Verification of Disabled Family Deduction** [24 CFR 5.611(a)(2)]

A disabled family is defined as a family whose head, spouse, or sole member is a person with a disability. It may also include two or more persons with disabilities living together, or one of more persons with disabilities living with one or more live-in aides (See 24 CFR 5.403).

Verification of disability must be receipt of SSI or SSA disability payments under Section 223 of the Social Security Act or 102(7) of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (42 U.S.C. 6001(7) or verified by appropriate diagnostician (such as physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, therapist, rehab specialist, or licensed social worker), using the HUD language as the verification format. To verify the statement from the applicable diagnostician, the PHA will send the Disability Certification Form to the diagnostician.

**Verification of Elderly Family Deduction** [24 CFR 5.611(a)(2)]

An elderly family is defined as a family whose head, spouse, or sole member is a person who is at least 62 years of age (See 24 CFR 5.403).

Verification of elderly family status shall be made by self certification via date of birth.

**Verification of Dependent Deduction** [24 CFR 5.611(a)(1)]

A dependent is defined as a member of the family (except foster children and foster adults) other than the family head, co-head, spouse, who is under 18 years of age, or is a person with a disability or a full-time student (See 24 CFR 5.603).

Sources of verification for dependent/full-time student status shall include the following:

1. Self-declaration of household composition and dependents under the age of 18 years.
2. Written verification, directly from educational institution, that includes name and address of institution, dates of enrollment, total number of hours registered for full-time students over 18 years of age. "Full-Time" status consists of 12 or more attempted credit hours per semester.

3. Where reasonable doubt exists, the PHA may require birth certificates, adoption papers, and/or court custody documents for verification of dependents.

## **I. VERIFYING NON-FINANCIAL FACTORS** [24 CFR 5.617(b)(2)]

### **Familial Relationships including Marital Status**

Family certification will normally be considered sufficient verification of family relationships. In cases where reasonable doubt exists, the family may be asked to provide verification. In the event there is a question of a familial relationship, the family will be required to complete the PHA's Statement of Familial Relationship form.

If the PHA has reasonable doubt regarding a familial relationship or family composition, verifications may be required (if applicable). Examples include:

1. Verification of relationship:
  - Official identification showing names.
  - Birth Certificates.
  - Baptismal certificates.
  - Marriage or civil licenses.
2. Verification of guardianship is:
  - Court-ordered documentation showing custody

### **Verification of Permanent Absence of Family Member or Change in Family Composition**

If an adult member, who was formerly a member of the household is reported permanently absent by the family, or a change in family composition, the PHA will consider the certification of family composition included in the Recertification Packet as verification of said change in family composition.

If the PHA has reasonable doubt regarding a change in family composition, verifications may be required (if applicable). Examples include:

- Husband or wife institutes divorce action.
- Husband or wife institutes legal separation.
- A permanent Order of Protection/Restraining Order obtained by one family member against another.

- Proof of another home address, such as utility bills, canceled checks for rent, drivers license, or lease or rental agreement, if available.
- Statements from other agencies, such as social services, or a written statement from the landlord or manager that the adult family member is no longer living at that location.
- If the adult family member is incarcerated, a document from the Court or correctional facility should be obtained stating how long they will be incarcerated.
  - School records indicating change of residence for children.

**Verification of Citizenship/Eligible Immigrant Status** [24 CFR 5.508, 5.510,5.512, 5.514]

To be eligible for assistance, individuals must be U.S. citizens or eligible immigrants. Individuals who are neither may elect not to contend their status. Eligible immigrants must fall into one of the categories specified by the regulations and must have their status verified by Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Each family member must declare their status once. Assistance cannot be delayed, denied, or terminated while verification of status is pending except that assistance to applicants may be delayed while the PHA hearing is pending.

The PHA will not require citizens to provide documentation of citizenship. Self-declaration will be accepted.

Eligible Immigrants 62 or over are required to sign a declaration of eligible immigration status and provide proof of age.

Non-citizens with eligible immigration status must sign a declaration of status and verification consent form and provide their original immigration documents which are copied front and back and returned to the family. The PHA verifies the status through the INS SAVE system. If this primary verification fails to verify status, the PHA must request within ten days that the INS conduct a manual search.

Ineligible family members who do not claim to be citizens or eligible immigrants must certify to their status on the Citizenship Certification Form signed by the head of household or spouse when applicable.

Non-citizen students on student visas are ineligible members even though they are in the country lawfully. They must provide their student visa but their status will not be verified and they do not sign a declaration but are listed on the statement of ineligible members.

Failure to Provide. If an applicant or participant family member fails to sign required declarations and consent forms or provide documents, as required, they must be listed

as an ineligible member. If the entire family fails to provide and sign as required, the family may be denied or terminated for failure to provide required information.

### **Time of Verification**

For applicants, verification of U.S. citizenship/eligible immigrant status occurs at time of application.

The PHA will not provide assistance to any family prior to the affirmative establishment and verification of the eligibility of the individual or at least one member of the family.

For family members added after other members have been verified, the verification occurs prior to approval of addition to household.

Once verification has been completed for any covered program, it need not be repeated except that, in the case of port-in families, if the initial PHA does not supply the documents, the receiving PHA must conduct the determination.

### **Extensions of Time to Provide Documents**

The PHA will not grant an extension of time for families to submit evidence of eligible immigrant status.

### **Acceptable Documents of Eligible Immigration**

The regulations stipulate that only the following documents are acceptable unless changes are published in the Federal Register.

- Resident Alien Card (I-551)
- Alien Registration Receipt Card (I-151)
- Arrival-Departure Record (I-94)
- Temporary Resident Card (I-688)
- Employment Authorization Card (I-688B)
- Receipt issued by the INS for issuance of replacement of any of the above documents that shows individual's entitlement has been verified

A birth certificate is not acceptable verification of status of eligible immigration. All documents in connection with U.S. citizenship/eligible immigrant status must be kept five years.

If the PHA determines that a family member has knowingly permitted another individual who is not eligible for assistance to reside permanently in the family's unit, the family's assistance will be terminated, unless the ineligible individual has already been considered in prorating the family's assistance.

## Verification of Social Security Numbers [24 CFR 5.216]

Social Security Numbers must be provided as a condition of eligibility for all family members if they have been issued a number. Verification of Social Security Numbers will be done through a Social Security Card issued by the Social Security Administration. If a family member cannot produce a Social Security Card, only the documents listed below showing his or her Social Security Number may be used for verification. The family is also required to certify in writing that the document(s) submitted in lieu of the Social Security Card information provided is/are complete and accurate:

Verification of benefits or Social Security Number from Social Security Administration

Copies of social security cards maintained in a file at the State Department of Human Services (DHS) Office, provided that copies are faxed to the PHA

A computer print-out, from the DHS benefit system, verifying the Social Security Number of the individual(s).

### **APPLICANTS AND/OR PARTICIPANTS:**

For applicant/participant individual members age 6 years and older OR under 6 years of age and do have an assigned Social Security Number:

These individuals of an applicant/participant household will be given up to 90 days to provide verification of the individual's Social Security Number. These individuals will not be considered applicant/participant household members until such time as verification is received. If, at the end of 90 days, verification has not been provided, the family will be subject to denial of assistance or termination of assistance depending on the household status.

For applicant/participant individual members under 6 years of age and have yet to be assigned a Social Security Number:

These individuals will be issued an HUD Alternate ID Number and added to the household composition. The family will then be required to provide verification of the individual's Social Security Number within 90 days. If, at the end of 90 days, verification has not been provided, the family will be subject to denial of assistance or termination of assistance depending on the household status.

Extensions may be possible if the reason why the family cannot provide verification of a Social Security Number is out of the control of the family.

This information is to be provided at the time the change in family composition is reported to the PHA.

If the family member states they have not been issued a number, the family member will be required to sign a certification to this effect.

### **Medical Need for Larger Unit**

A written certification that a larger unit is necessary due to medical conditions or needs must be obtained from a reliable, knowledgeable professional.

## **J. VERIFICATION OF WAITING LIST PREFERENCES** [24 CFR 982.207]

### **Local Preferences**

#### **Involuntary Displacement**

Families who claim they are being or have been displaced due to either a federally declared disaster or due to government action: written verification by the displacing unit or agency of government, verification by FEMA, or by a service agency such as the Red Cross.

Families who claim they are being or have been displaced due to domestic violence and that they qualify for the local preference:

Written verification from SABLE House that the person is a victim of domestic violence and that the victim is participating in on-going counseling.

The family must certify that the abuser will not return to the household without the advance written approval of the PHA. Before giving approval, the PHA will require verification of the following:

Statement from social worker, psychologist, or other professional familiar with the abuser that he/she has received counseling/treatment and is unlikely to continue the abuse.

Statement from local law enforcement agency that no complaints have been filed since the date of the preference approval.

Families who claim they have been or are about to be displaced to avoid reprisals for providing information to assist police in a criminal investigation.

Certification of threat assessment by a law enforcement agency

Oral or written recommendation from law enforcement agency or HUD.

Families who claim to be displaced by hate crimes.

Written statement from law enforcement agency, HUD, Fair Housing or other agency responsible for non-discrimination advocacy. Statement should contain approximate number of occurrences and date of last occurrence. Only hate

crimes that meet the conditions of ORS 166.155 will be considered for preference.

Displacement by HUD disposition of a project: Written verification from HUD.

Other Local Preferences:

Families, who are current Public Housing residents, who need to move either due to remodel activities or due to the medical needs of the family:

Documentation written in the file by staff will be acceptable.

Families who claim to have been accepted into “special needs” projects, limited to: the Lease-to-Own program (through Polk CDC); the “Buyback” program (through Polk CDC); and, a specific project identified in order to protect the local government’s interest in an existing rehabilitation loan program administered by Polk CDC:

Written or oral verification from Polk CDC will be acceptable.

“Continually-Assisted” families whose assistance was terminated because of insufficient funding:

Copy of Notice of Termination of Assistance will be acceptable.

## Chapter 8

### VOUCHER ISSUANCE AND BRIEFINGS

[24 CFR 982.301, 982.302]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The PHA's goals and objectives are designed to assure that families selected to participate are equipped with the tools necessary to locate an acceptable housing unit. Families are provided sufficient information regarding the program and how to achieve maximum benefit while complying with program requirements. When eligibility has been determined, the PHA will conduct a mandatory briefing to ensure that families know how the program works. The briefing will provide a broad description of owner and family responsibilities, PHA procedures, and how to lease a unit. The family will also receive a briefing packet, which provides more detailed information about the program including the benefits of moving outside areas of poverty and minority concentration. This chapter describes how briefings will be conducted, the information that will be provided to families, and the policies for how changes in the family composition will be handled.

#### **A. ISSUANCE OF VOUCHERS** [24 CFR 982.204(d), 982.54(d)(2)]

When funding is available, the PHA will issue vouchers to applicants whose eligibility has been determined. The number of vouchers issued must ensure that the PHA stays as close as possible to fully utilizing the funding provided by HUD. The PHA performs a monthly review of electronic information on units leased and dollars spent to determine whether applications can be processed, and the number of vouchers that can be issued.

The PHA may over-issue vouchers only to the extent necessary to meet leasing goals based upon the historic "find rate" for Voucher holders. Provided the PHA does not experience a funding reduction from HUD without advance notice, all vouchers which are over-issued will be honored. If the PHA finds it is over-leased, it must adjust future issuance of vouchers in order not to exceed the ACC budget limitations over the funding year.

#### **B. BRIEFING TYPES AND REQUIRED ATTENDANCE** [24 CFR 982.301]

##### **Initial Applicant Briefing**

A full HUD-required briefing will be conducted for applicant families who are determined to be eligible for assistance. The briefings will be conducted in groups as much as possible. Individual briefings will be provided, as necessary, due to language barriers

or disability issues. Families who attend group briefings and still have the need for individual assistance will be referred to the appropriate Tenant Counselor/Inspector.

Briefings will generally be conducted in English. Briefings will also be provided in Spanish, as needed.

The purpose of the briefing is to explain how the program works and the documents in the voucher holder's packet to families so that they are fully informed about the program. This will enable them to utilize the program to their advantage, and it will prepare them to discuss it with potential owners and property managers.

The PHA will not issue a voucher to a family unless the household representative has attended a briefing and signed the voucher. Applicants who provide prior notice of inability to attend a briefing will automatically be scheduled for the next briefing. Applicants who fail to attend two scheduled briefings, without prior notification and approval of the PHA, may be denied admission based on failure to supply information needed for certification. The PHA will conduct individual briefings for families with disabilities at their home, upon request by the family, if required for reasonable accommodation.

### **Briefing Packet** [24 CFR 982.301(b)]

The documents and information provided in the briefing packet for the voucher program will comply with all HUD requirements.

The family is provided with the following information and materials:

- The term of the voucher, and the PHA policy for requesting extensions or suspensions of the voucher (referred to as tolling).
- A description of the method used to calculate the housing assistance payment for a family, including how the PHA determines the payment standard for a family; how the PHA determines total tenant payment for a family and information on the payment standard. Utility allowance schedules are available upon request when the location area and type of dwelling proposed is known. How the PHA determines the maximum allowable rent for an assisted unit, including the rent reasonableness evaluation process.
- Where the family may lease a unit. For a family that qualifies to lease a unit outside the PHA jurisdiction under portability or mobility procedures, the information includes an explanation of how portability/mobility works.
- The West Valley Housing Authority Tenancy Addendum, which includes the HUD required tenancy addendum and must be included in the lease.

- The Request For Tenancy Approval (RFTA) form, provided by WVHA, that the family must use to request approval of their tenancy and a description of the procedure for completion of the form to request approval for a tenancy.
- A marketing brochure called "The Landlord Advantage" that can assist the family to market the program to new landlords.
- A statement of the PHA policy on providing information about families to prospective owners.
- The PHA Subsidy Standards including when and how exceptions are made and how the voucher size relates to the unit size selected.
- The HUD brochure on how to select a unit and/or the HUD brochure "A Good Place to Live" on how to select a unit that complies with HQS.
- The HUD pamphlet on lead-based paint entitled Protect Your Family From Lead in Your Home.
- The EPA brochure, A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture and Your Home, to assist educating families about and how to prevent this hazard in their home.
- Information on Federal, State and local equal opportunity laws and a copy of the housing discrimination complaint form. The PHA will also include the pamphlet "Fair Housing: It's Your Right" and/or other information about fair housing laws and guidelines.
- A list of landlords or other parties willing to lease to assisted families or help in the search and/or known units available for the voucher size issued. The list includes landlords or other parties who are willing to lease units or help families find units outside areas of poverty or minority concentration.
- If the family includes a person with disabilities, notice that the PHA will provide assistance in locating accessible units and/or a list of available accessible units known to the PHA.
- The family obligations under the program.
- The grounds on which the PHA may terminate assistance for a participant family because of family action or failure to act.

- PHA informal hearing procedures including when the PHA is required to offer a participant family the opportunity for an informal hearing, and how to request the hearing.
- Information explaining how portability/mobility works, including a list of neighboring housing agencies, available upon request, with contact information for use by families who move under portability/mobility.
- A map, upon request, showing areas of the jurisdiction and surrounding areas for the purpose of expanding housing opportunities for families.
- Information regarding the PHA's outreach program, which assists families who are interested in, or experiencing difficulty in obtaining available housing units in areas outside of minority concentrated locations.
- PHA's sample lease for owner's optional use if they do not have a standard lease they use for unassisted tenants.
- The HUD form, The Housing Assistance Payments Contract (HAP Contract) Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance Housing Choice Voucher Program, for the owner's information and signature.
- Requirements for reporting changes between annual recertifications.
- The Family Self Sufficiency program and its advantages.

If the family includes a person with disabilities, the PHA will ensure compliance with CFR 8.6 to ensure effective communication.

### **Move Briefing**

A move briefing will be held for participants who will be reissued a voucher to move, and who have been recertified within the last 120 days, and have given notice of intent to vacate to their landlord with a copy to the PHA. This briefing includes incoming portable and outgoing mobility families. If the family has not been through a full briefing recently and the program has had changes, they may be required to attend the full briefing.

### **C. ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION IN AREAS WITHOUT LOW INCOME OR MINORITY CONCENTRATION**

At the briefing, families are encouraged to search for housing in non-impacted areas and the PHA will provide assistance to families who wish to do so.

The PHA has maps that show various areas and information about facilities and services in neighboring areas such as schools, transportation, and supportive and social services.

The PHA will investigate and analyze when voucher holders are experiencing difficulties locating or obtaining housing units outside areas of concentration.

The assistance provided to such families includes:

Direct contact with landlords.

Counseling with the family.

Providing information about services in various non-impacted areas.

Formal or informal discussions with landlord groups.

Formal or informal discussions with social service agencies.

Meeting with rental referral companies or agencies.

Provide information (Move Vouchers only) on using Mobility to relocate to other housing authority jurisdictions covered under intergovernmental agreements.

#### **D. ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES WHO CLAIM DISCRIMINATION**

The PHA will give participants a copy of HUD Form 903 to file a complaint and will provide assistance with completion of the form if needed.

#### **E. SECURITY DEPOSIT REQUIREMENTS** [24 CFR 982.313]

The owner is not required to but may collect a security deposit from the tenant. Security deposits charged to families may be any amount the owner wishes to charge, subject to the following conditions:

Security deposits charged by owners may not exceed those charged to unassisted tenants nor the maximum prescribed by Oregon State law.

For lease-in-place families, responsibility for first and last month's rent is not considered a security deposit issue. In these cases, the owner should settle the issue with the tenant prior to the beginning of assistance.

#### **F. TERM OF VOUCHER** [24 CFR 982.303, 982.54(d)(11)]

During the briefing session, each household will be issued a voucher, which represents a contractual agreement between the PHA and the Family specifying the rights and responsibilities of each party. It does not constitute admission to the program, which occurs when the lease and contract become effective.

## **Expirations**

The voucher is valid for a period of at least sixty calendar days from the date of issuance. The family must submit a Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) and Lease, within the sixty-day period, unless an extension has been granted by the PHA.

If the voucher has expired, and has not been extended by the PHA or expires after an extension, the family will be denied assistance. The family will not be entitled to a review or hearing. If the family is currently assisted, they may remain as a participant in their unit if there is an assisted lease/contract in effect.

## **Suspensions**

When a Request for Approval of Tenancy is received, the PHA will not deduct the number of days required to process the request from the 60 day term of the voucher.

## **Extensions**

A family may request a written request for an extension of the voucher time period. All requests for extensions must be received prior to the expiration date of the voucher. Extensions are permissible at the discretion of the PHA up to a maximum of an additional 30 days primarily for these reasons:

- The PHA is satisfied that the family has made a reasonable effort to locate a unit, including seeking the assistance of the PHA, throughout the initial sixty-day period and the family is not unduly restricting their search by seeking only single-family units or specific areas or locations. A completed search record is required.
- Extenuating circumstances such as hospitalization or a family emergency for an extended period of time, which has affected the family's ability to find a unit within the initial sixty-day period. Verification is required.
- The family was experiencing difficulty in finding a unit due to disability accessibility requirements or large size (four or larger) bedroom unit requirement.

In addition, the PHA will extend the term up to and additional 30 days if the family needs and requests an extension as a reasonable accommodation to make the program accessible to and usable by a family member with a disability. If the family needs an extension in excess of 60 days, the PHA will extend the voucher term for the amount of time reasonably required for said reasonable accommodation.

All extensions must be approved by the Executive Director or Section 8 and Occupancy Manager.

## **Assistance to Voucher Holders**

Families who require additional assistance during their search may contact the PHA Office to request assistance. Voucher holders will be notified at their briefing session that the PHA maintains a rental listing bulletin board in the office lobby and regularly updates the listing of available units. They are advised that they can stop by anytime during open office hours to check the rental listings.

Upon request, the PHA will assist families with negotiations with owners and provide other assistance related to the families' search for housing. The families are recommended to keep a search record from the beginning in order that they may have such documentation in case they need an extension.

## **G. VOUCHER ISSUANCE DETERMINATION FOR SPLIT HOUSEHOLDS**

[24 CFR 982.315]

In those instances when a family assisted under the Section 8 program becomes divided into two otherwise eligible families due to divorce, legal separation, or the division of the family, and the new families cannot agree as to which new family unit should continue to receive the assistance, and there is no determination by a court, the PHA shall follow the factors outlined to determine which of the families will continue to be assisted:

1. If only one portion of the family has either minor children or an elderly or disabled person, that portion of the family shall continue to receive assistance in the program, regardless of who remains in the unit. If the portion of the family remaining in the unit will not continue to receive assistance, the Voucher and the Voucher Contract will be terminated in accordance with the terms of the Voucher Contract. The portion of the family to continue receiving assistance will be given the assistance once the current Voucher Contract has been terminated.
2. If both portions of the family have either minor children or an elderly or disabled person, that portion of the family remaining in the Voucher-assisted unit shall continue to receive assistance in the program. If the family has not yet leased a unit and both portions of the family have minor children or an elderly or disabled person, the PHA will make the determination taking into consideration whether domestic violence was involved in the breakup and whether there is a recommendation from other social service professionals.
3. If both portions of the family agree in writing which portion of the family shall continue to receive assistance, the PHA will follow the family's wishes.

4. If a court determines the disposition of property between members of the family in a divorce or separation under a settlement or judicial decree, the PHA is bound by the court's determination.

Documentation of these factors will be the responsibility of the requesting parties.

If documentation is not provided, the PHA will terminate assistance on the basis of failure to provide information necessary for a recertification.

#### **H. REMAINING MEMBER OF TENANT FAMILY - RETENTION OF VOUCHER**

[24 CFR 982.315]

To be considered the remaining member of the tenant family, the person must have been previously approved, by the PHA, to be living in the unit.

A live-in attendant, by definition, is not a member of the family and will not be considered a remaining member of the Family.

In order for a minor child to continue to receive assistance as a remaining family member:

The court has to have awarded emancipated minor status to the minor, or

The minor is considered able to legally enter into a lease or rental agreement under Oregon State Law, or

The PHA has to have verified that social services and/or the Juvenile Court has arranged for another adult to be brought into the assisted unit to care for the child(ren) for an indefinite period.

A reduction in family size may require a reduction in the voucher family subsidy size.

## Chapter 9

### REQUEST FOR TENANCY APPROVAL AND CONTRACT EXECUTION

[24 CFR 982.302]

#### **INTRODUCTION** [24 CFR 982.305(a)]

The PHA's program operations are designed to utilize available resources in a manner that is efficient and provides eligible families timely assistance based on the number of units that can be leased within the funding provided by HUD. The PHA's objectives include maximizing HUD funds by providing assistance to as many eligible families and for as many eligible units as the budget will allow.

After families are issued a voucher, they may search for a unit anywhere within the jurisdiction of the PHA, or outside of the PHA's jurisdiction if they qualify for portability. The family must find an eligible unit under the program rules, with an owner/landlord who is willing to enter into a Housing Assistance Payments Contract with the PHA. This chapter defines the types of eligible housing, the PHA's policies which pertain to initial inspections, lease requirements, owner disapproval, and the processing of Requests For Tenancy Approval (RFTA).

#### **A. REQUEST FOR TENANCY APPROVAL** [24 CFR 982.302, 982.305(b)]

The Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) and a copy of the proposed lease, including the HUD prescribed tenancy addendum, must be submitted by the family during the term of the voucher. The family must submit the Request for Tenancy Approval in the form and manner required by the PHA.

The Request for Tenancy Approval must be signed by both the owner and voucher holder.

The PHA will not permit the family to submit more than one RFTA at a time.

The PHA will review the proposed lease and the Request for Tenancy Approval documents to determine whether or not they are approvable. The request will be approved if:

The unit is an eligible type of housing.

The unit meets HUD's Housing Quality Standards and any additional criteria as identified in this Administrative Plan.

The rent is reasonable.

The security deposit is approvable in accordance with any limitations in this plan.

The proposed lease complies with HUD and PHA requirements (See "Lease Review" section below).

The owner is approvable, and there are no conflicts of interest (See "Owner Disapproval" section below).

In addition to the above, at the time a family initially receives assistance in a unit (new admissions and moves), if the gross rent for the unit exceeds the applicable payment standard for the family, the family share of rent may not exceed 40 percent of the family monthly adjusted income (See "Owner Rents, Rent Reasonableness and Payment Standards" chapter of this Administrative Plan).

### **Disapproval of RFTA**

If the PHA determines that the request cannot be approved for any reason, the landlord and the family will be notified verbally with a follow-up in writing if the family and the owner cannot agree to revisions, which would allow approval. The PHA will instruct the owner and family of the steps or revisions that are necessary to approve the request. When, for any reason, an RFTA is not approved, the PHA will furnish another RFTA form to the family so that the family can continue to search for eligible housing.

### **B. ELIGIBLE TYPES OF HOUSING** [24 CFR 982.353]

The PHA will approve any of the following types of housing in the voucher program:

All structure types can be utilized.

Manufactured homes where the tenant leases the mobile home and the pad.

Units owned (but not subsidized) by the PHA following HUD-prescribed requirements.

A family can own a rental unit but cannot reside in it while being assisted, except in the case when the tenant owns the mobile home and leases the pad (only allowed due to reasonable accommodation). A family may lease in and have an interest in a cooperative housing development.

The PHA may not permit a voucher holder to lease a unit, which is receiving project-based Section 8 assistance or any duplicative rental subsidies.

### **C. LEASE REVIEW** [24 CFR 982.308]

The PHA will review the lease, particularly noting the approvability of optional charges and compliance with regulations and state and local law. The tenant also must have legal capacity to enter a lease under state and local law. Responsibility for utilities,

appliances and optional services must correspond to those provided on the Request For Tenancy Approval.

The family and owner must enter a written lease for the unit. If the owner uses a standard lease form for rental to unassisted tenants in the locality or the premises, the lease must be in such standard form (plus the HUD-prescribed tenancy addendum). If the owner does not use a standard lease form for rental to unassisted tenants, the owner may use another form of lease, such as a PHA provided model lease (plus the HUD-prescribed tenancy addendum). The terms and conditions of the lease must be consistent with state and local law.

The lease must specify:

- The names of the owner and tenant, and

- The address of the unit rented (including apartment number, if any), and

- The term of the lease (initial term and any provisions for renewal), and

- The amount of the monthly rent to owner, and

- The utilities and appliances to be supplied by the owner, and

- The utilities and appliances to be supplied by the family.

The West Valley Housing Authority Tenancy Addendum, including the HUD prescribed tenancy addendum, must be included in the lease word-for-word before the lease is executed.

The owner's lease (for dwellings built before 1978) must include the Lead Warning Statement and disclosure information required by 24 CFR 35.92(b).

The lease must provide that drug-related criminal activity engaged in by the tenant, any household member, or any guest on or near the premises, or any person under the tenant's control on the premises is grounds to terminate tenancy.

The lease must also provide that owner may evict family when the owner determines that:

- Any household member is illegally using a drug; or

- A pattern of illegal use of drugs by any household member interferes with the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

The lease must provide that the following types of criminal activity by a "covered person" are grounds to terminate tenancy:

Any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents (including property management staff residing on the premises);

Any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of their residences by persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises; or

Any violent criminal activity on or near the premises by a tenant, household member, or guest; or

Any violent criminal activity on the premises by any other person under the tenant's control.

The lease must provide that the owner may terminate tenancy if a tenant is:

Fleeing to avoid prosecution or custody or confinement after conviction for a crime, or attempt to commit a crime, that is a felony under the laws of the place from which the individual flees (high misdemeanor in NJ); or

Violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under Federal or State law.

House Rules of the owner may be attached to the lease as an addendum, provided they are approved by the PHA to ensure they do not violate any fair housing provisions and do not conflict with the tenancy addendum.

### **Actions Before Lease Term**

All of the following must always be completed before the beginning of the initial term of the lease for a unit:

The PHA has inspected the unit and has determined that the unit satisfies the HQS;

The PHA has determined that the rent charged by the owner is reasonable;

The landlord and the tenant have executed the lease, including the HUD-prescribed tenancy addendum;

The PHA has approved leasing of the unit in accordance with program requirements;

When the gross rent exceeds the applicable payment standard for the family, the PHA must determine that the family share (total family contribution) will not be more than 40% of the family's monthly adjusted income.

#### **D. SEPARATE AGREEMENTS**

Separate agreements are not necessarily illegal side agreements. Families and owners will be advised of the prohibition of illegal side payments for additional rent, or for items normally included in the rent of unassisted families, or for items not shown on the approved lease.

The family is not liable under the lease for unpaid charges for items covered by separate agreements and nonpayment of these agreements cannot be cause for eviction.

Owners and families may execute separate agreements for services, appliances (other than range and refrigerator) and other items that are not included in the lease if the agreement is in writing and approved by the PHA.

Any appliances, services or other items, which are routinely provided to unassisted families as part of the lease (such as air conditioning, dishwasher or garage) or are permanently installed in the unit, cannot be put under separate agreement and must be included in the lease. For there to be a separate agreement, the family must have the option of not utilizing the service, appliance or other item.

If the family and owner have come to a written agreement on the amount of allowable charges for a specific item, so long as those charges are reasonable and not a substitute for higher rent, they will be allowed.

All agreements for special items or services must be attached to the lease approved by the PHA. If agreements are entered into at a later date, they must be approved by the PHA and attached to the lease.

The PHA will not approve separate agreements for modifications to the unit for persons with disabilities. The modifications are usually within the dwelling and are critical to the use of the dwelling.

#### **E. INITIAL INSPECTIONS** [24 CFR 982.305(a) & (b)]

See "Housing Quality Standards and Inspections" chapter of this Administrative Plan.

#### **F. RENT LIMITATIONS** [24 CFR 982.507]

The PHA will make a determination as to the reasonableness of the proposed rent in relation to comparable units available for lease on the private unassisted market, and

the rent charged by the owner for a comparable unassisted unit in the building or premises.

By accepting each monthly housing assistance payment from the PHA, the owner certifies that the rent to owner is not more than rent charged by the owner for comparable unassisted units in the premises. The owner is required to provide the PHA with information requested on rents charged by the owner on the premises or elsewhere.

At all times during the tenancy, the rent to owner may not be more than the most current reasonable rent as determined by the PHA.

#### **G. DISAPPROVAL OF PROPOSED RENT** [24 CFR 982.502]

In any of the programs, if the proposed gross rent is not reasonable, at the family's request, the PHA will negotiate with the owner to reduce the rent to a reasonable rent. If the rent is not affordable because the family share would be more than 40% of the family's monthly adjusted income, the PHA will negotiate with the owner to reduce the rent to an affordable rent for the family.

At the family's request, the PHA will negotiate with the owner to reduce the rent or include some or all of the utilities in the rent to owner.

If the rent can be approved after negotiations with the owner, the PHA will continue processing the Request for Tenancy Approval and lease provided the owner puts the revised agreement in writing.

If the owner does not agree on the rent to owner after the PHA has tried and failed to negotiate a revised rent, the PHA will inform the family and owner that the lease is disapproved.

#### **H. INFORMATION TO OWNERS** [24 CFR 982.307(b), 982.54(d)(7)]

In accordance with HUD requirements, the PHA will furnish prospective owners with the family's current address as shown in the PHA's records and, if known to the PHA, the name and address of the landlord at the family's current and prior address. The PHA will make an exception to this requirement if the family's whereabouts must be protected due to domestic abuse or witness protection.

The PHA will inform owners that it is the responsibility of the landlord to determine the suitability of prospective tenants. Owners will be encouraged to screen applicants for rent payment history, payment of utility bills, eviction history, respecting the rights of other residents, damage to units, drug-related criminal activity or other criminal activity

that is a threat to the health, safety or property of others, and compliance with other essential conditions of tenancy.

A statement of the PHA's policy on release of information to prospective landlords will be included in the briefing packet which is provided to the family.

The PHA will provide the following information, based on documentation retained in the PHA files and only upon the owner providing written release signed by the prospective tenant:

- Eviction history
- Criminal or drug-related activity (if known to the PHA)
- Damage to rental units
- Drug trafficking by family members

The information will be provided for up to the last seven years, if known to the PHA.

The information will be provided orally.

Only the Executive Director or Section 8 and Occupancy Manager may provide this information. The PHA's policy on providing information to owners is included in the briefing packet and will apply uniformly to all families and owners.

#### **I. OWNER DISAPPROVAL [24 CFR 982.306]**

See chapter on "Owner Disapproval and Restriction."

#### **J. CHANGE IN TOTAL TENANT PAYMENT (TTP) PRIOR TO HAP EFFECTIVE DATE**

When the family reports changes in factors that will affect the total family share prior to the effective date of the HAP contract at admission, the information will be verified and the total family share will be recalculated. If the family does not report any change, the PHA need not obtain new verifications before signing the HAP contract, even if verifications are more than 60 days old.

#### **K. CONTRACT EXECUTION PROCESS [24 CFR 982.305(c)]**

The family and the owner will execute the lease agreement, and the owner and the PHA will execute the HAP contract. Copies of the documents will be furnished to the parties who signed the respective documents. The PHA will retain a copy of the lease, the original of the contract, and copies of all other signed documents.

The PHA makes every effort to execute the HAP contract before the commencement of the lease term. The HAP contract may not be executed more than 60 days after commencement of the lease term and no payments will be made until the contract is executed.

The following PHA representatives are authorized to execute a HAP contract on behalf of the PHA: Executive Director and the Section 8 and Occupancy Manager.

Owners must complete the PHA's Payee form and/or an Appointment of Agent form if they have an appointed agent to handle their rental property. A management agreement between the owner and the agent can substitute for the Appointment of Agent form. Owners must provide the current address of their residence (not a Post Office box) unless the property is managed by a real estate property management company. The owner's current address will be compared to the subsidized unit's address.

Owners must provide an employer identification number or social security number and complete a W-9 IRS form for the PHA.

The owner or agent must provide a home telephone number and business number if applicable.

Unless their lease was effective prior to June 17, 1998, a family may not lease properties owned by a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother of any family member. The PHA will waive this restriction as a reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with a disability.

## **L. CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP**

See "Owner Disapproval and Restriction" chapter.

## Chapter 10

### HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS AND INSPECTIONS

[24 CFR 982.401, Mobility Agreement]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Housing Quality Standards (HQS) are the HUD minimum quality standards for tenant-based programs. HQS standards are required both at initial occupancy and during the term of the lease. HQS standards apply to the building and premises, as well as the unit. Newly leased units must pass the HQS inspection before the beginning date of the assisted lease and HAP contract.

The PHA will inspect each unit under contract at least annually. The PHA will also have an inspection supervisor perform quality control inspections on the number of files required for file sampling by SEMAP annually to maintain the PHA's required standards and to assure consistency in the PHA's program. This chapter describes the PHA's procedures for performing HQS and other types of inspections, and PHA standards for the timeliness of repairs. It also explains the responsibilities of the owner and family, and the consequences of non-compliance with HQS requirements for both families and owners. The use of the term "HQS" in this Administrative Plan refers to the combination of both HUD and PHA requirements. (See additions to HQS).

#### **A. GUIDELINES/TYPES OF INSPECTIONS** [24 CFR 982.401(a), 982.405]

Efforts will be made at all times to encourage owners to provide housing above HQS minimum standards. The PHA will not promote any additional acceptability criteria which is likely to adversely affect the health or safety of participant families, or severely restrict housing choice.

All utilities must be in service prior to the inspection. If the utilities are not in service at the time of inspection, the inspector will notify the tenant or owner (whomever is responsible for the utilities according to the RFTA) to have the utilities turned on. The inspector will schedule a reinspection after being notified by the owner or tenant that the utilities have been turned on.

If the tenant is responsible for supplying the stove and/or the refrigerator, the PHA will allow the stove and refrigerator to be placed in the unit after the unit has passed all other HQS. The family must then certify that the appliances are in the unit and working. The PHA may conduct a reinspection.

There are four types of inspections the PHA will perform:

1. Initial/Move-in: Conducted upon receipt of Request for Tenancy Approval.
2. Annual: Must be conducted within twelve months of the last annual inspection.
3. Special/Complaint: At request of owner, family or an agency or third-party.
4. Quality Control

**B. INITIAL HQS INSPECTION** [24 CFR 982.401(a), 982.305(b)(2), Mobility Agreement]

**Timely Initial HQS Inspection**

The PHA will inspect the unit, determine whether the unit satisfies the HQS and notify the family and owner of the determination within 10-days after the family and the owner have submitted a request for approval of tenancy.

The same 10-day clock will be suspended during any period when the unit is not available for inspection.

The PHA will include "date unit available for inspection" on the RFTA form. This date will determine whether the PHA will be required to meet the same 10-day requirement or whether the PHA will suspend the same 10-day period because the unit is not available for inspection until after the same 10-day period.

Under the current Mobility Agreement, initial inspections will be conducted within ten (10) calendar days from the time the owner notifies the Housing Authority that the unit is ready for inspection.

For file audit purposes, the PHA will note in each tenant file, the date on which the unit first became available for inspection according to information obtained from the RFTA or from the owner or the tenant. PHA staff will document any delays in completion of the initial HQS inspection.

The Initial Inspection will be conducted to:

Determine if the unit and property meet the HQS defined in this Plan.

Document the information to be used for determination of rent-reasonableness.

If the unit fails the initial Housing Quality Standards inspection, the family and the owner will be advised to notify the PHA once repairs are completed.

On an initial inspection, the owner will be given up to 30-days to correct the items noted as Fail, at the inspector's discretion, depending on the amount and complexity of work to be done.

The owner will be allowed one reinspection for repair work to be completed. The PHA may agree to conduct a second reinspection, for good cause, at the request of the family and owner.

If the time period given by the inspector to correct the repairs has elapsed, or the maximum number of failed reinspections has occurred, the family must select another unit.

### **C. ANNUAL HQS INSPECTIONS** [24 CFR 982.405(a), Mobility Agreement]

The PHA conducts an inspection in accordance with Housing Quality Standards at least annually. The annual inspection is scheduled between 120-90 days prior to the anniversary date of the lease and prior to the date inspected in the prior year, so that the inspections are conducted at least annually, as required by SEMAP. Special inspections may be scheduled between anniversary dates.

Under the current Mobility Agreement, annual inspections will be conducted within 60 calendar days from the date the request for inspection was received.

HQS deficiencies which cause a unit to fail must be corrected by the landlord unless it is a fail for which the tenant is responsible.

The family must allow the PHA to inspect the unit at reasonable times with reasonable notice. [24 CFR 982.551(d)]

Inspections will be conducted on business days only and during normal business hours unless arrangements are made with the individual inspector and approved by the Section 8 and Occupancy Manager.

The PHA will notify the family in writing, or via telephone call with the family, at least three days prior to the inspection.

Inspection: The family is notified of the date and time of the inspection appointment by mail. If the family is unable to be present or have an authorized representative present, they must reschedule the appointment so that the inspection is completed within 10 days.

If the family does not contact the PHA to reschedule the inspection, or if the family misses ~~two~~ **one** rescheduled inspection appointments, the PHA will consider the family to have violated a Family Obligation and their assistance will be terminated in accordance with the termination procedures in the Plan.

**Reinspection:** The family ~~is~~ will be provided a reasonable notice of the reinspection appointment, by phone or by mail, following the end of the corrective period, or any PHA-approved extension.

If the family is not at home for the reinspection appointment, a card will be left at the unit with instructions to contact the inspector within a certain time to schedule the reinspection appointment. If the deficiencies have not been corrected by the time of the reinspection, or the family fails to allow access to the unit, a notice of abatement will be sent to the owner and a copy to the family. The abatement notification will clarify that the abated HAP will not be paid retroactively and the HAP will only be paid from the date the reinspection is completed forward, provided the unit passes HQS at the reinspection. If the deficiencies were a result of family-caused violations, a Notice of Termination to the family will be sent out, in accordance with PHA policies.

### **Time Standards for Repairs**

Emergency items which endanger the family's health or safety must be corrected by the owner within 24 hours of notification. (See Emergency Repair Items section.)

For non-emergency items, repairs must be made within 30 days.

For major repairs, the Section 8 and Occupancy Manager may approve an extension beyond 30 days.

### **Rent Increases**

Rent to owner increases may not be approved if the unit is in a failed condition.

### **D. SPECIAL/COMPLAINT INSPECTIONS** [24 CFR 982.405(c), Mobility Agreement]

If at any time the family or owner notifies the PHA that the unit does not meet Housing Quality Standards, the PHA will conduct an inspection. The PHA may also conduct a special inspection based on information from third parties such as neighbors or public officials.

The PHA will inspect only the items which were reported, but if the inspector notices additional deficiencies that would cause the unit to fail HQS, the responsible party will be required to make the necessary repairs.

If the annual inspection date is within 120 days of a special inspection, and as long as all items are inspected that are included in an annual inspection, the special inspection will be categorized as annual and all annual procedures will be followed.

Under the current Mobility Agreement, special inspections will be conducted within five (5) calendar days from the date the request for inspection was received.

**E. QUALITY CONTROL INSPECTIONS** [24 CFR 982.405(b)]

Quality Control inspections will be performed by the Section 8 and Occupancy Manager on the number of files required by SEMAP. The purpose of Quality Control inspections is to ascertain that each inspector is conducting accurate and complete inspections, and to ensure that there is consistency among inspectors in application of the HQS.

The sampling of files will include recently completed inspections (within the prior 3 months), a cross-section of neighborhoods, and a cross-section of inspector .

**E. ACCEPTABILITY CRITERIA AND EXCEPTIONS TO HQS** [24 CFR 982.401 (a)]

The PHA adheres to the acceptability criteria in the program regulations with the additions described below.

Additions

Sanitary Facilities:

All worn or cracked toilet seats must be replaced.

Space & Security:

Any room used for sleeping must have a window or a door leading to the exterior.

Bedrooms in basements or attics are not allowed unless they have adequate ventilation and emergency exit capability.

All exterior doors must be weather-tight to avoid any air or water infiltration, be lockable, have no holes, have all trim intact, and have a threshold.

Thermal Environment:

Any wood or pellet burning stoves must have been inspected and approved by the local authorities for the installation and must have the chimney cleaned annually. Any fireplaces being used must have the chimney cleaned annually.

### Illumination and Electricity:

Any electrical outlets found to have reversed connections, will be required to be corrected.

### Structure and Materials:

Unless the dwelling unit is a mobile home, the dwelling must have a solid foundation, free of serious defects. Mobile homes will be required to have tie-downs unless they meet the conditions for the HUD-approved waiver. Those conditions are: the unit must be installed on a level lot and the mobile must be insured.

All floors must be in a finished state (no plywood).

### Water Supply:

Any private water supply will be required to be tested for coliform bacteria contamination and if positive, must be corrected prior to approval of the unit. Such private water supply systems will be required to be tested every five years.

### Site and Neighborhood:

If the dwelling is to be occupied by children under the age of 8 years of age, any readily accessible hazardous conditions, such as: a fast running creek, a deep pond, a deep canyon, a railroad track, or any other dangerous conditions, shall be discussed with the tenant family.

### Smoke Dectectors:

All smoke detectors shall meet the requirements prescribed in Oregon State Law, which includes either being hard-wired with a hush feature or use a 10-year lithium battery and have a hush feature. All smoke detector placements must comply with NFPA 74.

### Modifications

Modifications or adaptations to a unit due to a disability must meet all applicable HQS and building codes.

Extension for repair items not required by HQS will be granted for modifications/adaptations to the unit if agreed to by the tenant and landlord. PHA will allow execution of the HAP contract if unit meets all requirements and the modifications do not affect the livability of the unit.

**G. EMERGENCY REPAIR ITEMS** [24 CFR 982.404(a)]

The following items are considered of an emergency nature and must be corrected by the owner or tenant (whoever is responsible) within 24 hours of notice by the inspector:

Natural gas leak or fumes

Electrical problem which could result in shock or fire

Lack of functioning toilet or open sewage near the premises

In those cases where there is leaking gas or potential of fire or other threat to public safety, and the responsible party cannot be notified or it is impossible to make the repair, proper authorities will be notified by the PHA.

If the emergency repair item(s) are not corrected in the time period required by the PHA, and the owner is responsible, the housing assistance payment will be abated and if not repaired within a reasonable time, the HAP contract will be terminated.

If the emergency repair item(s) are not corrected in the time period required by the PHA, and it is an HQS breach which is a family obligation, the PHA will terminate the assistance to the family.

**Smoke Detectors**

If the smoke detector is not operating properly the PHA will contact the owner by phone and request the owner to repair the smoke detector within 24 hours. The PHA will reinspect the unit the following day, if possible.

If the PHA determines that the family has purposely disconnected the smoke detector (by removing batteries or other means) , the family will be required to repair the smoke detector within 24 hours and the PHA will reinspect the unit the following day, if possible.

The PHA will issue a written warning to any family determined to have purposely disconnected the unit's smoke detector. Warning will state that deliberate disconnection of the unit's smoke detector is a health and fire hazard and is considered a violation of the HQS and grounds for terminating a family's assistance.

## H. ACCEPTANCE OF OWNER/TENANT SELF-CERTIFICATION OF REPAIRS

In cases when there are no more than five (5) deficiencies, the PHA may accept, at its discretion, an owner's and tenant's self-certification that required repairs were made, if all deficiencies are minor items from the following list:

1. Replacement of burnt-out light bulbs	11. Replacement of cracked/missing light switch/sockets/outlets or covers
2. Replacement/repair of windows that allow air infiltration	12. Replacement/repair/cleaning of oven and stove
3. Replacement/repair/cleaning of refrigerator	13. Replacement of broken/destroyed interior doors
4. Repair of closet door off track	14. Minor plumbing leaks/caulking
5. Cleaning of mold areas	15. Replacement/repair of bathroom ceiling fans
6. Repair of garbage disposal	16. Installation of interior/exterior handrail
7. Replacement of missing light globes	17. Rehanging of gutters and downspouts
8. Removal of tripping hazards	18. Replacement of missing heater knobs
9. Removal of roof moss	19. Replacement of cracked toilet seat
10. Repairs of wall or ceiling holes in units with no lead-based paint issues	

This list is not meant to be all-inclusive, but a standard list of minor deficiencies. Additional minor deficiencies may be added to this list at the discretion of the PHA.

## I. CONSEQUENCES IF OWNER IS RESPONSIBLE (NON-EMERGENCY ITEMS) [24 CFR 982.405, 982.453]

In determining units qualified for an owner's and tenant's self-certification or other acceptable verification as determined by the PHA of completed repairs, the PHA will consider its experience with the owner, tenant and property. The PHA is under no obligation to allow self-certification and may elect to do a reinspection to verify the correction of any HQS deficiencies. The PHA may also elect to do a Quality Control inspection of self-certified repairs or conduct a reinspection at the tenant's request. If, as a result of the QC inspection or reinspection, the PHA finds that the deficiencies have not been corrected, the PHA will enforce retroactive abatement action to the date of original inspection, and self-certification will no longer be an option.

If the PHA does not receive the completed and signed certification of repairs by the due date, the PHA will take the appropriate action to terminate the HAP contract.

When it has been determined that a unit on the program fails to meet Housing Quality Standards, and the owner is responsible for completing the necessary repair(s) in the time period specified by the PHA and no extension has been approved by the PHA, the assistance payment to the owner will be abated.

## **Abatement**

A Notice of Abatement will be sent to the owner, and the abatement will be effective as noted in the notice. The PHA will inspect abated units as soon as possible following the owner's notification that the work has been completed and as soon as the owner and/or tenant make the unit available for the inspection.

If the owner makes repairs during the abatement period, payment will resume on the day the unit passes inspection. No retroactive payments will be made to the owner for the period of time the rent was abated and the unit did not comply with HQS. The notice of abatement states that the tenant is not responsible for the PHA's portion of rent that is abated.

The PHA has discretion not to abate the rent if an inspector determines that the owner has made a good faith effort to correct deficiencies.

The PHA will inspect abated units within 5 days of the owner's notification that repairs have been completed. This can include the returning of the completed self-declaration form. Abatements will be lifted effective the date the unit passes inspection.

## **Extensions for Repairs**

The PHA will grant an extension in lieu of abatement in the following cases:

There is an unavoidable delay in completing repairs due to difficulties in obtaining parts or contracting for services.

The owner makes a good faith effort to make the repairs or contract for services to complete the repair and an unavoidable delay occurs.

The repairs must be delayed due to climate conditions.

The extension will be made for a period of time not to exceed 30 days, except in delays due to climate conditions which could be up to six months. At the end of that time, if the work is not completed, the PHA will begin the abatement. If the repair is not completed within 30 days following the abatement, the contract will be terminated.

## **Termination of Contract**

If the owner is responsible for repairs, and fails to correct all the deficiencies cited prior to the end of the abatement period, the owner will be sent a Notice of Termination. Prior to the effective date of the termination, the abatement will remain in effect.

If repairs are completed before the effective termination date, the termination may be rescinded by the PHA if the tenant chooses to remain in the unit. Only one Housing Quality Standards ~~re~~inspection will be conducted after the termination notice is issued.

## **H. J. DETERMINATION OF RESPONSIBILITY** [24 CFR 982.404, 982.54(d)(14)]

Certain HQS deficiencies are considered the responsibility of the family:

Tenant-paid utilities not in service.

Failure to provide or maintain family-supplied appliances.

Damage to the unit or premises caused by a household member or guest beyond normal wear and tear.

Disconnecting or dismantling smoke detectors, including removing batteries

The owner is responsible for all other HQS violations.

The owner is responsible for vermin infestation even if caused by the family's living habits. However, if such infestation is serious and repeated, it may be considered a lease violation and the owner may evict for serious or repeated violation of the lease. The PHA may terminate the family's assistance on that basis.

The inspector will make a determination of owner or family responsibility during the inspection. The owner or tenant may appeal this determination to the Section 8 and Occupancy Manager within ten days of the inspection.

If the family is responsible but the owner carries out the repairs, the owner will be encouraged to bill the family for the cost of the repairs and the family's file will be noted.

## **H. K. CONSEQUENCES IF FAMILY IS RESPONSIBLE** [24 CFR 982.404(b)]

If non-emergency violations of HQS are determined to be the responsibility of the family, the PHA will require the family make any repair(s) or corrections within 30 days. If the repair(s) or correction(s) are not made in this time period, the PHA will terminate assistance to the family, after providing an opportunity for an informal hearing. Extensions in these cases must be approved by the Section 8 and Occupancy Manager. The owner's rent will not be abated for items which are the family's responsibility.

If the tenant is responsible and corrections are not made, the HAP contract will terminate when assistance is terminated.

## Chapter 11

### OWNER RENTS, RENT REASONABLENESS, AND PAYMENT STANDARDS

[24 CFR 982.502, 982.503, 982.504, 982.505, 982.507]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The policies in this chapter reflect the amendments to the HUD regulations, which were implemented by the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 for the Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance Program. These amendments became effective on October 1, 1999, which is referred to as the "merger date". These amendments complete the merging of the Section 8 Certificate and Voucher Programs into one program, called the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

All Section 8 participant families have been transitioned to the Housing Choice Voucher Program on or before October 1, 2001. Rent calculation methods for the Housing Choice Voucher Program are described at 24 CFR 982.505. The rent calculation formula is specific and is not subject to interpretation.

The PHA will determine rent reasonableness in accordance with 24 CFR 982.507(a). It is the PHA's responsibility to ensure that the rents charged by owners are reasonable based upon unassisted comparables in the rental market, using the criteria specified in 24 CFR 982.507(b).

This chapter explains the PHA's procedures for determination of rent-reasonableness, payments to owners, adjustments to the payment standards, and rent adjustments.

#### **A. RENT TO OWNER IN THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM**

The rent to owner is limited only by rent reasonableness. The PHA must demonstrate that the rent to owner is reasonable in comparison to rent for other comparable unassisted units.

The only other limitation on rent to owner is the maximum rent standard at initial occupancy (24 CFR 982.508). At the time a family initially receives tenant-based assistance for occupancy of a dwelling unit, whether it is a new admission or a move to a different unit, if the gross rent for the unit exceeds the applicable payment standard for the family, the family share may not exceed 40 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income.

During the initial term of the lease, the owner may not raise the rent to owner.

## **B. MAKING PAYMENTS TO OWNERS** [24 CFR 982.451]

Once the HAP contract is executed, the PHA begins processing payments to the landlord. A HAP Register will be used as a basis for monitoring the accuracy and timeliness of payments. Changes are made automatically to the HAP Register for the following month. Checks are disbursed by the accounting department to the owner each month. Monthly checks will be mailed between the first and the fifth of the month once the PHA has received the monies from HUD. Checks may be picked up by owner at the PHA Office upon special request. Interim checks during the month will be issued in accordance with a schedule from the accounting department.

### **Excess Payments**

The total of rent paid by the tenant plus the PHA housing assistance payment to the owner may not be more than the rent to owner. The owner must immediately return any excess payment to the PHA.

Owners who do not return excess payments will be subject to penalties as outlined in the "Owner or Family Debts to the PHA" chapter of this Administrative Plan.

### **Late Payments to Owners**

It is a local business practice in Polk County for property managers and owners to charge tenants a reasonable late fee for rents not received by the owner or property manager by the due date, notwithstanding any grace period which is typically 5 days past the first of the month. Any late fees must be included and identified in the rental agreement and must comply with Oregon Tenant/Landlord Laws.

Should the PHA be late in making the regular monthly housing assistance payments and fail to mail the payment due the owner by the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the month, the PHA will pay a \$25.00 late fee to the owner, if requested by the owner.

Proof of "Mailed to" date will be the date that is identified on the printout from the internal postage meter when all the HAP payments were run through the postage machine.

To assist the PHA in its outreach efforts to owners, and to provide better customer service, the PHA will offer to send the monthly HAP deposits to the bank account of the owner.

The PHA will not be obligated to pay any late payment penalty if HUD determines that late payment is due to factors beyond the PHA's control, such as a delay in the receipt of program funds from HUD. The PHA will use administrative fee income or the administrative fee reserve as its only source for late payment penalty. The PHA will not use any program funds for the payment of late fee penalties to the owner.

**C. RENT REASONABLENESS DETERMINATIONS [24 CFR 982.507]**

The PHA will determine and document on a case-by-case basis that the approved rent is reasonable in comparison to rent for other comparable unassisted units in the market. This applies to all Section 8 programs.

The PHA will not approve a lease until the PHA determines that the initial rent to owner is a reasonable rent. The PHA must redetermine the reasonable rent before any increase in the rent to owner, and if there is a five percent decrease in the published FMR in effect 60 days before the contract anniversary (for the unit size rented by the family) as compared with the FMR in effect one year before the contract anniversary.

The PHA must redetermine rent reasonableness if directed by HUD and based on a need identified by the PHA's auditing system. The PHA may elect to redetermine rent reasonableness at any other time. At all times during the assisted tenancy, the rent to owner may not exceed the reasonable rent as most recently determined or redetermined by the PHA

The owner will be advised that by accepting each monthly housing assistance payment the owner will be certifying that the rent to owner is not more than rent charged by the owner for comparable unassisted units in the premises. If requested, the owner must give the PHA information on rents charged by the owner for other units in the premises or elsewhere.

The data for other unassisted units will be gathered from newspapers, Realtors, professional associations, inquiries of owners, market surveys, and other available sources.

The PHA maintains and updates unit comparability books. The unit comparability books consist of informational sheets on local private market rentals. They are arranged in sections for unit size and type. The following items are included on the informational data sheets used for rent reasonableness documentation:

Size (number of Bedrooms/square footage)

Unit Type

Age of unit

Location

Amenities (bathrooms, dishwasher, garbage disposal, garage, etc.)

Quality of Maintenance

Utilities

The unit comparability books are to be maintained and updated periodically throughout the year. Units that were previously unassisted that become assisted (or become owner-occupied) are noted to that effect and then will no longer be used for comparables while the unit is assisted (or owner-occupied). The informational sheet will remain in the books for reference for prior rent comparability determinations that may be audited for accuracy. If the unit again becomes unassisted and available for rental, the informational sheet will be so noted and will then be available for future comparisons.

### **Rent Reasonableness Methodology**

After review of the private unassisted market rentals within Polk County (including the three major cities of Dallas, Independence, and Monmouth), it has been determined that there is little variance in the private market rentals based upon the location within West Valley Housing Authority's jurisdiction and there are limited private market rentals in some of the more rural areas. For this reason, the unit comparability books are not separated by location. The inspectors are instructed to first look for comparables by unit size and type in the same general area. If such comparables are not available, they must identify and use comparables first by the unit size and type rather than location. If there are no units available by the unit size and type for the largest bedroom sizes, they are directed to identify any similar type of unit of a smaller bedroom size and impute a rent by adding \$50/month for the extra bedroom. They must identify three comparable units and average the gross rents to calculate the approvable comparable rent for the proposed unit.

### **D. PAYMENT STANDARDS FOR THE VOUCHER PROGRAM** [24 CFR 982.503]

The Payment Standard is used to calculate the housing assistance payment for a family. In accordance with HUD regulation, and at the PHA's discretion, the Voucher Payment Standard amount is set by the PHA between 90 percent and 110 percent of the HUD published FMR. This is considered the basic range. The PHA reviews the appropriateness of the Payment Standard annually when the FMR is published. In determining whether a change is needed, the PHA will ensure that the Payment Standard is always within the range of 90 percent to 110 percent of the new FMR, unless an exception payment standard has been approved by HUD.

The PHA will establish a single voucher payment standard amount for each FMR area in the PHA jurisdiction. For each FMR area, the PHA will establish payment standard amounts for each "unit size". The PHA may have a higher payment standard within the PHA's jurisdiction if needed to expand housing opportunities outside areas of minority or poverty concentration, as long as the payment standard is within the 90-110% of FMR range.

The PHA may approve a higher payment standard within the basic range, if required as a reasonable accommodation for a family that includes a person with disabilities.

#### **E. ADJUSTMENTS TO PAYMENT STANDARDS** [24 CFR 982.503]

Payment Standards may be adjusted, within HUD regulatory limitations, to increase Housing Assistance Payments in order to keep families' rents affordable. The PHA will not raise Payment Standards solely to make "high end" units available to Voucher holders. The PHA may use some or all of the measures below in making its determination whether an adjustment should be made to the Payment Standards.

##### **Assisted Families' Rent Burdens**

The PHA will review its voucher Payment Standard amounts at least annually to determine whether more than 40 percent of families in a particular unit size are paying more than 30% of their annual adjusted income for rent. If it is determined that particular unit sizes in the PHA's jurisdiction have payment standard amounts that are creating rent burdens for families, the PHA will modify its payment standards for those particular unit sizes. (See also **PHA Decision Point** below for further clarification.)

##### **Quality of Units Selected**

The PHA will review the quality of units selected by participant families when making the determination of the percent of income families are paying for housing, to ensure that Payment Standard increases are only made when needed to reach the mid-range of the market.

##### **PHA Decision Point**

The PHA will review the average percent of income of families on the program. If more than 40% of families are paying more than 30% of monthly adjusted income, the PHA will determine whether there is a difference by voucher size, whether families are renting units larger than their voucher size, and whether families are renting units which exceed HUD's HQS and any additional standards added by the PHA in the Administrative Plan.

If families are paying more than 30% of their income for rent due to the selection of larger bedroom size units or luxury units, the PHA may decline to increase the payment standard. If these are not the primary factors for families paying higher rents, the PHA will continue increasing the payment standard.

The PHA will also consider the HUD funding available to provide assistance to the families. If the funding is less than the amount needed to assist the PHA's current baseline number of units (699), the voucher payment standard amounts will be held to

be between the 90% - 100% of FMR to be able to assist more households on the program.

### **Rent to Owner Increases**

The PHA may review a sample of the units to determine how often owners are increasing rents and the average percent of increase by bedroom size. If the owner is requesting an increase in the rent, a rent comparability review will be completed.

### **Time to Locate Housing**

The PHA may consider the average time period for families to lease up under the Voucher program. If more than 30% of Voucher holders are unable to locate suitable housing within the term of the voucher and the PHA determines that this is primarily due to the rents in the jurisdiction being unaffordable for families, the Payment Standard may be adjusted.

### **Lowering of the Payment Standard**

Lowering of the FMR may require an adjustment of the Payment Standard. Additionally, statistical analysis may reveal that the Payment Standard should be lowered. In any case, the Payment Standard will not be set below 90 percent of the FMR without authorization from HUD.

### **Financial Feasibility**

Before increasing the Payment Standard, the PHA may review the budget to determine the impact projected subsidy increases would have on funding available for the program and number of families served.

For this purpose, the PHA will compare the number of families who could be served under a higher Payment Standard with the number assisted under current Payment Standards.

### **File Documentation**

A file will be retained by the PHA for at least three years to document the analysis and findings to justify whether or not the Payment Standard was changed.

## **F. EXCEPTION PAYMENT STANDARDS**

If the dwelling unit is located in an exception area, the PHA must use the appropriate payment standard amount established by the PHA for the exception area in accordance with regulation at 24 CFR 982.503(c). West Valley Housing Authority currently has no exception areas designated.

**G. OWNER PAYMENT IN THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM**  
(24 CFR 982.308(g))

The owner is required to notify the PHA, in writing, at least sixty days before any change in the amount of rent to owner that is scheduled to go into effect. Any requested change in rent to owner will be subject to rent reasonableness requirements. See 24 CFR 982.503.

## Chapter 12

### RECERTIFICATIONS

[24 CFR 982.516]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In accordance with HUD requirements, the PHA will reexamine the income and household composition of all families at least annually. Families will be provided accurate annual and interim rent adjustments. Recertifications and interim examinations will be processed in a manner that ensures families are given reasonable notice of rent increases. All annual activities will be coordinated in accordance with HUD regulations. It is a HUD requirement that families report all changes in household composition. This Chapter defines the PHA's policy for conducting annual recertifications and coordinating annual activities. It also explains the interim reporting requirements for families, and the standards for timely reporting.

#### **A. ANNUAL ACTIVITIES** [24 CFR 982.516, 982.405]

There are two activities the PHA must conduct on an annual basis. These activities will be coordinated whenever possible:

Recertification of income and family composition

HQS inspection

The PHA produces a monthly listing of units under contract to ensure that timely reviews of housing quality and factors related to total tenant payment/family share can be made.

Reexamination of the family's income and composition must be conducted at least annually.

Annual inspections: See "Housing Quality Standards and Inspections" chapter.

Rent adjustments: See "Owner Rents, Rent Reasonableness and Payment Standards" chapter.

#### **B. ANNUAL RECERTIFICATION/REEXAMINATION** [24 CFR 982.516]

Families are required to be recertified at least annually.

#### **Moves Between Reexaminations**

When families move to another dwelling unit:

An annual recertification will be required and the anniversary date will be changed. If the family had a recent annual or interim recertification and the verifications for

income, assets, and deductions are less than 60 days old and the family's reported income, assets, and deductions have not changed, those verifications can be used for the move/annual recertification.

Income limits are not used as a test for continued eligibility at recertification.

### **Reexamination Notice to the Family**

The PHA will maintain a reexamination tracking system and the household will be mailed the recertification packet at least 90 days in advance of the anniversary date. If requested as an accommodation by a person with a disability, the PHA will provide the notice in an accessible format. The PHA will also mail the notice and recertification packet to a third party, if requested as reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities. These accommodations will be granted upon verification that they meet the need due to their disability.

### **Procedure**

The PHA's procedure for conducting annual recertifications will be:

All families will be sent a mail-in recertification packet with a cover notice that allows the family to contact their caseworker and schedule an interview appointment if they desire such an appointment to make sure all information is provided. The family can complete the mail-in recertification packet and return it to the PHA either by mail or in person. The caseworker will review the packet for completeness and to assure that all appropriate signatures have been provided and will contact the family identifying what is missing, if anything. Then, the caseworker will send off the third-party verifications needed. (See Chapter 7 regarding Verification Procedures.)

### **Persons with Disabilities**

Persons with disabilities who are unable to complete the mail-in recertification packet and request assistance from the PHA will be provided such assistance in the PHA Office or the tenant's home, upon verification that the accommodation requested meets the need due to their disability. The person with a disability will be required to either sign the forms or make their mark with a witness attesting to the mark to assure that the information provided by the family is accurate and complete.

### **Completion of Annual Recertification**

The PHA will have all recertifications for families completed before the anniversary date. This includes notifying the family of any changes in rent, preferably 30 days before the scheduled date of the change in family rent.

### **Collection of Information** [24 CFR 982.516(f)]

The PHA has established appropriate recertification procedures necessary to ensure that

the income data provided by families is complete and accurate. The PHA will require the family to complete a Personal Declaration Form and the Recertification Packet prior to all recertification interviews. If the family needs assistance, the PHA representative will interview the family and enter the information provided by the family on the recertification form, review the information with the family and have them sign the form.

### **Failure to Return the Annual Mail-In Recertification Packet (or Complete Missing Information or Signatures)**

If the family has failed to return the annual recertification packet by the deadline included in the notice, the PHA caseworker will send a follow-up notice to the family advising them to return the annual recertification packet within a specified time period or they will be issued a notice of termination of their assistance. If the family's annual recertification packet is incomplete, the PHA caseworker will send a follow-up notice to the family advising them of the deadline for providing the missing information or signatures. If the family fails to meet that deadline, the PHA caseworker will send a notice of termination of their assistance. All notices of termination of the family's assistance will advise them of their right to an informal hearing regarding the termination.

### **Verification of Information**

The PHA will follow the verification procedures and guidelines described in Chapter 7 of this Plan. Verifications for reexaminations must be less than 60 days old.

### **Tenant Rent Increases**

If tenant rent increases, a reasonable notice (preferably 30 days in advance) is mailed to the family prior to the scheduled effective date of the annual recertification. If a delay is due to the family's failure to provide information or verifications in a timely manner, the rent increase will be effective the date of the annual recertification, provided the notice is in advance of the date of the annual recertification.

If there has been a misrepresentation or a material omission by the family, or if the family causes a delay in the reexamination processing, there will be a retroactive increase in rent to the scheduled effective date of the annual recertification.

### **Tenant Rent Decreases**

If tenant rent decreases, it will be effective on the anniversary date unless the family specifically requests an Interim recertification to be effective the first of the following month and would be effective a minimum of 30 days prior to the anniversary date.

If the family causes a delay so that the processing of the reexamination is not complete by the anniversary date, rent change will be effective on the first day of the month following completion of the reexamination processing by the PHA.

## **C. REPORTING INTERIM CHANGES** [24 CFR 982.516]

Program participants must report all changes in household composition to the PHA between annual reexaminations. This includes additions due to birth, adoption and court-awarded custody. The family must obtain PHA approval prior to all other additions to the household.

If any new "adult" family member is added, an Interim recertification is required and family income must include any income of the new family member. The PHA will conduct a reexamination to determine such additional income and will make the appropriate adjustments in the housing assistance payment and family unit size.

The U.S. citizenship/eligible immigrant status of additional family members must be declared and verified as required at the first interim or regular recertification after moving into the unit.

### **Interim Recertification Policy**

#### **Increases in Income**

The PHA will not conduct interim recertifications when families have an increase in income, unless the family was on zero income. All program participants with annual income equal to zero must report all changes in income and complete an Interim recertification within 30 days of receipt of income. (Examples would be: to begin work; to begin receiving unemployment; to begin receiving child support; to begin receiving TANF, etc.). The effective date of the interim recertification will be the first of the second month following when the family began receiving the income. (Example: The family began receiving income in June, the increase shall be effective August 1.)

Participants with annual income greater than zero are not required to report increases in income between annual recertifications unless such increase is due to the addition or deletion of adult family members or the family is moving to a new dwelling unit.

#### **Decreases in Income**

Participants may report a decrease in income and other changes, which would reduce the amount of tenant rent, such as an increase in allowances or deductions. The PHA must calculate the change if a decrease in income is reported. The change will be effective the first of the month following when the decrease was reported.

#### **PHA Errors**

If the PHA makes a calculation error at admission to the program or at an annual reexamination, an interim reexamination will be conducted, if necessary, to correct the error, but the family will not be charged retroactively. Families will be given decreases, when applicable, retroactive to when the decrease for the change would have been effective if calculated correctly. Families will be given reasonable, preferably 30 days

advance, notice of any increase in rent due to correction of a PHA error.

#### **D. OTHER INTERIM REPORTING ISSUES**

An interim reexamination does not affect the date of the annual recertification.

Any changes reported by participants other than those listed in Section C. which require an interim reexamination, will be noted in the file by the staff person but will not be processed between regularly-scheduled annual recertifications.

#### **E. INCOME CHANGES RESULTING FROM WELFARE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS** [24 CFR 5.615]

The PHA will not reduce the family share of rent for families whose welfare assistance is reduced due to a "specified welfare benefit reduction," which is a reduction in benefits by the welfare agency specifically because of:

Fraud in connection with the welfare program, or

Noncompliance with a welfare agency requirement to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program.

However, the PHA will reduce the rent if the welfare assistance reduction is a result of:

The expiration of a lifetime time limit on receiving benefits, or

A situation where the family has complied with welfare program requirements but cannot or has not obtained employment, or

A situation where a family member has not complied with other welfare agency requirements.

Should the TANF grant be discontinued and completely closed, the PHA will reduce the rent if the family requests an interim recertification.

#### **Definition of Covered Family**

A household that receives benefits for welfare or public assistance from a State or public agency program which requires, as a condition of eligibility to receive assistance, the participation of a family member in an economic self-sufficiency program.

#### **Definition of "Imputed Welfare Income"**

The amount of annual income, not actually received by a family, as a result of a specified welfare benefit reduction, that is included in the family's income for purposes of determining rent.

The amount of imputed welfare income is determined by the PHA, based on written information supplied to the PHA by the welfare agency, including:

The amount of the benefit reduction

The term of the benefit reduction

The reason for the reduction

Subsequent changes in the term or amount of the benefit reduction

The family's annual income will include the imputed welfare income, as determined at the family's annual or interim reexamination, during the term of the welfare benefits reduction (as specified by the welfare agency).

The amount of imputed welfare income will be offset by the amount of additional income the family receives that commences after the sanction was imposed. When additional income from other sources is at least equal to the imputed welfare income, the imputed welfare income will be reduced to zero.

If the family was not an assisted resident when the welfare sanction began, imputed welfare income will not be included in annual income.

If the family claims the amount of imputed welfare income has been calculated incorrectly, the Section 8 and Occupancy Manager will review the calculation for accuracy. If the imputed welfare income amount is correct, the PHA will provide a written notice to the family that includes:

A brief explanation of how the amount of imputed welfare income was determined;

A statement that the family may request an informal hearing if they do not agree with the PHA determination.

### **Verification Before Denying a Request to Reduce Rent**

The PHA will obtain verification from the welfare agency stating that the family's benefits have been reduced due to fraud or noncompliance with welfare agency economic self-sufficiency or work activities requirements before denying the family's request for rent reduction.

The PHA will rely on the welfare agency's written notice to the PHA regarding welfare sanctions.

### **Cooperation Agreements** [24 CFR 5.613]

The PHA has executed a Cooperation Agreement with the local welfare agency under which the welfare agency agrees:

To target public assistance benefits and services to participants in the PHA's Self-Sufficiency program;

To provide written verification to the PHA concerning welfare benefits for applicant and participant families, and specified reduction in welfare benefits for a family member, listing: amount of reduction; reason for reduction; term of reduction, and subsequent redetermination.

The PHA will rely on the welfare agency's written notice regarding the amount of specified benefit reduction.

The PHA has executed a Cooperation Agreement with the local welfare agency to ensure timely and accurate verification of noncompliance.

The PHA has taken a proactive approach to culminating an effective working relationship between the PHA and the local welfare agency for the purpose of targeting economic self-sufficiency programs throughout the community that are available to Section 8 tenant-based assistance families.

The PHA and the local welfare agency have mutually agreed to exchange information regarding any economic self-sufficiency and/or other appropriate programs or services that would benefit Section 8 tenant-based assistance families.

### **Family Dispute of Amount of Imputed Welfare Income**

If the family disputes the amount of imputed income and the PHA denies the family's request to modify the amount, the PHA will provide the tenant with a notice of denial, which will include:

An explanation for the PHA's determination of the amount of imputed welfare income

A statement that the tenant may request an informal hearing.

A statement that the grievance information received from the welfare agency cannot be disputed at the informal hearing, and the issue to be examined at the informal hearing will be the PHA's determination of the amount of imputed welfare income, not the welfare agency's determination to sanction the welfare benefits.

### **E. NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS OF RECERTIFICATIONS** [HUD Notice PIH 98-6]

The HUD Form 50058 will be completed and transmitted as required by HUD.

The Notice of Rent Change is mailed to the owner and the tenant. Signatures are not required by the PHA. If the family disagrees with the rent adjustment, they may request an informal hearing.

## **G. TIMELY REPORTING OF CHANGES IN INCOME (AND ASSETS)**

[24 CFR 982.516(c)]

### **Standard for Timely Reporting of Changes**

The PHA requires that families report interim changes to the PHA within 30 days of when the change occurs. Any information, document or signature needed from the family which is needed to verify the change must be provided within 30 days of the change.

If the change is not reported within the required time period, or if the family fails to provide documentation or signatures, it will be considered untimely reporting.

### **Procedures when the Change is Reported in a Timely Manner**

The PHA will notify the family and the owner of any change in the Housing Assistance Payment to be effective according to the following guidelines:

Increases in the Tenant Rent are effective on the first day of the second month following that in which the change occurred.

Decreases in the Tenant Rent are effective the first of the month following that in which the change is reported. However, no rent reductions will be processed until all the facts have been verified, even if a retroactive adjustment results.

The change may be implemented based on documentation provided by the family, pending third-party written verification.

### **Procedures when the Change is Not Reported by the Family in a Timely Manner**

If the family does not report the change as described under Timely Reporting, the family will have caused an unreasonable delay in the interim reexamination processing and the following guidelines will apply:

Increase in Tenant Rent will be effective retroactive to the date it would have been effective had it been reported on a timely basis. The family will be liable for any overpaid housing assistance and may be required to sign a Repayment Agreement.

Decrease in Tenant Rent will be effective on the first of the month following the month that the change was reported.

### **Procedures when the Change is Not Processed by the PHA in a Timely Manner**

"Processed in a timely manner" means that the change goes into effect on the date it should when the family reports the change in a timely manner. If the change cannot be made effective on that date, the change is not processed by the PHA in a timely manner.

In this case, an increase will be effective after reasonable, preferably 30 days, notice prior to the first of the month after completion of processing by the PHA.

If the change resulted in a decrease, the overpayment by the family will be calculated retroactively to the date it should have been effective, and the family will be paid back the amount they were overcharged.

**H. CHANGES IN VOUCHER SIZE AS A RESULT OF FAMILY COMPOSITION CHANGES** [24 CFR 982.516(c)]

(See "Subsidy Standards" chapter.)

**I. CONTINUANCE OF ASSISTANCE FOR "MIXED" FAMILIES** [24 CFR 5.518]

Under the Noncitizens Rule, "mixed" families are families that include at least one citizen or eligible immigrant and any number of ineligible members.

The Noncitizens Rule was implemented prior to November 29, 1996, and "mixed" families who were participants as of June 19, 1995, shall continue receiving full assistance if they meet all of the following criteria:

The head of household or spouse is a U.S. citizen or has eligible immigrant status;  
AND

All members of the family other than the head, the spouse, parents of the head or the spouse, and children of the head or spouse are citizens or eligible immigrants.  
The family may change the head of household to qualify under this provision.

**J. MISREPRESENTATION OF FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES**

If any participant deliberately misrepresents the information on which eligibility or tenant rent is established, the PHA may terminate assistance and may refer the family file/record to the proper authorities for appropriate disposition. (See Program Integrity Addendum.)

## Chapter 13

### MOVES WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE/PORTABILITY

[24 CFR 982.314, 982.353, 982.355(a), Mobility Agreement]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

HUD regulations permit families to move with continued assistance to another unit within the PHA's jurisdiction, or to a unit outside of the PHA's jurisdiction under portability procedures. It may also be possible for a family to move to a neighboring housing authority's jurisdiction under a special Mobility intergovernmental agreement. The regulations also allow the PHA the discretion to develop policies which define any limitations or restrictions on moves. This chapter defines the procedures for moves, both within and outside of, the PHA's jurisdiction, and the policies for restriction and limitations on moves.

#### **A. ALLOWABLE MOVES**

A family may move to a new unit with continued assistance if:

The assisted lease for the old unit has terminated because the PHA has terminated the HAP contract for owner breach, or the lease was terminated by mutual agreement of the owner and the family.

The owner has given the family a notice to vacate, or has commenced an action to evict the tenant, or has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the family (unless assistance to the family will be terminated).

The family has given proper notice of lease termination (and if the family has a right to terminate the lease on notice to owner).

The assisted lease, for the old unit, is terminated (and the family is otherwise eligible to move) and the family moves to a new unit under the new Mobility Agreement within either Salem Housing Authority's or Marion County Housing Authority's jurisdiction.

#### **B. RESTRICTIONS ON MOVES** [24 CFR 982.314, 982.552(a)]

Families **will not** be permitted to move within the PHA's jurisdiction or outside the PHA's jurisdiction under portability or Mobility procedures during the initial year of assisted occupancy unless a mutual termination agreement is signed by both the landlord and the tenant. Such mutual termination agreement moves are subject to approval by the Executive Director or the Section 8 and Occupancy Manager.

Families **will not** be permitted to move more than once in a 12-month period.

In the event the PHA determines a situation of **insufficient funding** exists, families will not be permitted to move to another unit that involves a higher Gross Rent (Contract Rent plus applicable utility allowance) than the unit the family currently resides in.

EXCEPTION: In the event the family's Voucher size increases, the restriction on a higher Gross Rent (Contract Rent plus applicable utility allowance) shall not apply.

The PHA will deny permission to move if:

- The family has violated a family obligation.
- The family owes the PHA money.
- The family has moved or been issued a voucher within the last twelve months.

The PHA may make exceptions to these restrictions if there is an emergency reason for the move over which the participant has no control. Examples of these situations include, but are not limited to, domestic violence and an approved request for Reasonable Accommodation.

### **C. PROCEDURE FOR MOVES** [24 CFR 982.314]

#### **Issuance of Voucher**

Subject to the restrictions on moves, if the family has not been recertified within the last 120 days, the PHA will issue the voucher to move **only after** completion of a recertification. The family must provide the PHA with a copy of their written 30-day notice to vacate, with the landlord's signature as received or a Certificate of Mailing from a Post Office when they mailed the notice to the landlord. This must be provided prior to completion of the "Move" recertification. **Note: The PHA will not pay any overlap of assistance – the PHA will not begin assistance on a new unit until the old contract has ended.**

If the family does not locate a new unit, they may remain in the current unit so long as the owner permits.

**The annual recertification date will be changed to coincide with the new lease-up date.**

#### **Notice Requirements**

Briefing sessions emphasize the family's responsibility to give the owner and the PHA proper written notice of any intent to move.

The family must give the owner the required 30-days written notice of intent to vacate specified in the lease and must give a copy to the PHA simultaneously. Please note the documentation requirements listed above under **Issuance of Voucher.**

## **Time of Contract Change**

A move within the same building or project, or between buildings owned by the same owner, will be processed like any other move, **including that there will be no overlapping of assistance.** In a move, assistance stops at the old unit at the end of the month in which the tenant ceased to occupy, unless the tenant left prior to the end of their rent obligation under a proper 30-day notice which carried their rent obligation into the following month. Assistance will not start on the new unit until after the contract has terminated on their prior unit. Assistance payments may not overlap and the new contract cannot begin until the old contract has been terminated. This means the tenant will be responsible for the full rent on the new unit until the assistance obligation has ended on the prior contract.

## **D. PORTABILITY** [24 CFR 982.353, Mobility Agreement]

Portability applies to families moving out of or into the PHA's jurisdiction within the United States and its territories.

In accordance with the Mobility Agreement, eligible families may move to a new unit, within the jurisdiction of Salem Housing Authority or Marion County Housing Authority and will be considered a remaining client of West Valley Housing Authority in all respects. Assistance will be based on the receiving housing authority's Payment Standards, utility allowances and rent comparability standards.

## **E. OUTGOING PORTABILITY** [24 CFR 982.353, 982.355]

Within the limitations of the regulations and this policy, a participant family has the right to receive tenant-based voucher assistance to lease a unit outside the PHA's jurisdiction, anywhere in the United States, in the jurisdiction of a PHA with a tenant-based program. When a family requests to move outside of the PHA's jurisdiction, the request must specify the area to which the family wants to move.

If there is more than one PHA in the area in which the family has selected a unit, the PHA will choose the receiving PHA.

**The PHA will deny permission to move to a jurisdiction with higher payment standards if there is insufficient funding provided by HUD to pay the higher obligation unless the receiving PHA is willing to absorb the family into their own program.**

## **Restrictions on Portability/Mobility**

### **Applicants**

If neither the head nor spouse had a domicile (legal residence) in the PHA's jurisdiction at the date of their initial application for assistance, the family **will not** be permitted to exercise portability/mobility upon initial issuance of a voucher, unless the PHA approves such action. [NOTE: legal domicile is defined by local government.]

For a portable applicant family, the family must be eligible for admission under the receiving PHA's program to be accepted.

### Participants

After an applicant has leased-up in the jurisdiction of the initial housing agency, they cannot exercise portability/mobility during the first year of assisted occupancy, except in the following circumstances:

The receiving and initial PHA agree to allow the move and it is considered an emergency reason for the move over which the participant has no control. An example would be a move necessitated due to threats of harm due to domestic violence issues.

The PHA **will not** permit families to exercise portability:

If the family is in violation of a family obligation.

If the family owes money to any PHA.

If the family has moved out of its assisted unit in violation of the lease.

If the PHA does not have sufficient funding for continued assistance to support the move in accordance with 24 CFR 982.314(e)(1).

EXCEPTION: If a Voucher participant is a verified victim under the Violence Against Women's Act, a Voucher may be issued as long as the family is otherwise eligible to move.

Receiving PHA's will be required to submit hearing determinations to the PHA within 30 days, if applicable.

### **E. INCOMING PORTABILITY** [24 CFR 982.354, 982.355]

#### **Absorption or Administration**

The PHA will accept a family with a valid voucher from another jurisdiction and administer or absorb the voucher. If administering, the family will be issued a "portable" voucher by the PHA. The term of the voucher will not expire before the expiration date of any initial PHA voucher. The family must submit a request for approval of tenancy for an eligible unit to the receiving PHA during the term of the receiving PHA voucher. The receiving PHA may grant extensions in accordance with this Administrative Plan. However, if the family decides not to lease-up in the receiving PHA's jurisdiction, they must contact the initial PHA to request an extension.

The PHA will absorb incoming vouchers in cases where the initial PHA absorbs an equal number of the PHA's outgoing vouchers, provided the PHA has sufficient funds to absorb the vouchers.

Incoming portable families whose vouchers are being administered will not be absorbed unless the PHA has determined that it would be advantageous for the PHA to do so. This determination will be made by the PHA Executive Director or Section 8 and Occupancy Manager.

When the PHA does not absorb the incoming voucher, it will administer the initial PHA's voucher. However, West Valley Housing Authority's policies will prevail as the receiving PHA. For admission to the program, a family must be income eligible in the area where the family initially leases a unit with assistance under the program. The receiving PHA does not re-determine income limit eligibility for a portable family that was already receiving assistance in the initial PHA Section 8 tenant-based program.

The PHA will issue a "portability voucher" according to its own Subsidy Standards. If the family has a change in family composition which would change the voucher size, the PHA will change to the proper size based on its own Subsidy Standards.

In cases when a family moves into the PHA's jurisdiction, under the Mobility Agreement, the family will remain the client of the initial housing authority (that being either Salem Housing Authority or Marion County Housing Authority) in all respects. Assistance will be based on the PHA's Payment Standards, utility allowances and rent comparability standards for the housing authority in which the unit is located.

### **Income and Total Tenant Payment of Incoming Portables** [982.353(d)]

As receiving PHA, the PHA will conduct a recertification interview. If the documents necessary to complete the recertification are missing, or are over 120 days old, or there has been a change in the family's circumstances, the PHA must obtain new verifications to complete the recertification.

If the family's income is such that a \$0 subsidy amount is determined prior to lease-up in the PHA's jurisdiction, the PHA will refuse to enter into a contract on behalf of the family at \$0 assistance.

### **Requests for Tenancy Approval**

**A briefing will be mandatory for all portability families.**

When the family submits a Request for Tenancy Approval, it will be processed using the PHA's policies. If the family does not submit a Request for Tenancy Approval or does not execute a lease, the initial PHA will be notified within 30 days of the expiration of the Voucher by the receiving PHA. If the family leases up successfully, the receiving PHA will notify the initial PHA within 60 days, and the billing process will commence. If the PHA denies assistance to the family, the PHA will notify the initial PHA within 30 days and the family will be offered a review or informal hearing.

The receiving PHA will notify the family of its responsibility to contact the initial PHA if the family wishes to move outside the PHA's jurisdiction under continued portability.

## **Regular Program Functions**

The PHA will perform all program functions applicable to the tenant-based assistance program, such as:

Annual reexaminations of family income and composition;

Annual inspection of the unit; and

Interim examinations, when requested by the family or required by this Administrative Plan.

In the case of outgoing Mobility families, the PHA will perform all program functions applicable to the tenant-based assistance program with the exception of any applicable HQS functions including annual inspections.

In the case of incoming Mobility families, the PHA will only perform program functions related to HQS including annual inspections.

## **Terminations**

The receiving PHA will notify the initial PHA in writing of any termination of assistance within ten (10) working days of the termination. If an informal hearing is required and requested by the family, the hearing will be conducted by the receiving PHA, using the regular hearing procedures included in this Plan. A copy of the hearing decision will be furnished to the initial PHA.

The initial PHA will be responsible for collecting amounts owed by the family for claims paid and for monitoring repayment. If the initial PHA notifies the PHA that the family is in arrears or the family has refused to sign a payment agreement, the PHA will terminate assistance to the family.

## **Required Documents**

As receiving PHA, the PHA will require the documents listed on the HUD Portability Billing Form from the initial PHA.

## **Billing Procedures for Portability Moves**

As receiving PHA, the PHA will bill the initial PHA monthly for housing assistance payments, administrative fees, and special claims (such as Lead-Based Paint Clearance testing) unless requested otherwise by the initial PHA.

The PHA will bill 100% of the housing assistance payment, 100% of special claims and 80% of the administrative fee (at the initial PHA's rate) for each "portability" voucher leased as of the first day of the month.

The PHA will notify the initial PHA of changes in subsidy amounts and will expect the initial PHA to notify the PHA of changes in the administrative fee amount to be billed.

Both PHAs must comply with the standards set down in PIH 2008-43 related to Portability billing deadlines.

**Billing Procedures for Mobility Moves**

Billing for inspection services, under the Mobility Agreement, will be in accordance with the Mobility Agreement.

## Chapter 14

### CONTRACT TERMINATIONS

[24 CFR 982.311, 982.314]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract is the contract between the owner and the PHA which defines the responsibilities of both parties. This chapter describes the circumstances under which the contract can be terminated by the PHA and the owner, and the policies and procedures for such terminations.

#### **A. CONTRACT TERMINATION** [24 CFR 982.311]

The term of the HAP contract is the same as the term of the lease. The contract between the owner and the PHA may be terminated by the PHA, or by the owner or tenant terminating the lease.

No future subsidy payments on behalf of the family will be made by the PHA to the owner after the month in which the contract is terminated. The owner must reimburse the PHA for any subsidies paid by the PHA for any period after the contract termination date. If the family continues to occupy the unit after the Section 8 contract is terminated, the family is responsible for the total amount of rent due to the owner.

After a contract termination, if the family has a “move” voucher and meets the criteria for a move with continued assistance, the family may lease-up in another unit. The contract for the new unit may not begin until the contract for the old unit has terminated.

#### **B. TERMINATION BY THE FAMILY: MOVES** [24 CFR 982.314(c)(2)]

Family termination of the lease must be in accordance with the terms of the lease.

#### **C. TERMINATION OF TENANCY BY THE OWNER: EVICTIONS** [24 CFR 982.310, 982.455]

If the owner wishes to terminate the lease, the owner must provide proper notice as stated in the lease. During the term of the lease, the owner may not terminate the tenancy except for the grounds stated in the HUD regulations. During the term of the lease, the owner may only evict for:

- Serious or repeated violations of the lease, including but not limited to failure to pay rent or other amounts due under the lease, or repeated violation of the terms and conditions of the lease;
- Violations of Federal, state or local law that imposes obligations on the tenant in connection with the occupancy or use of the premises; or criminal activity by the tenant, any member of the household, a guest or

another person under the tenant's control that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by the other residents, or persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises or any drug-related criminal activity on or near the premises.

- Other good cause.

During the initial term of the lease, the owner may not terminate the tenancy for “other good cause” unless the owner is terminating the tenancy because of something the family did or failed to do (see 982.310).

### **Evidence of Criminal Activity**

The owner may terminate tenancy and evict by judicial action a family for criminal activity by a covered person if the owner determines they have engaged in the criminal activity:

- Regardless of arrest or conviction
- Without satisfying the standard of proof used for a criminal conviction

### **Termination of Tenancy Decisions**

If the law and regulations permit the owner to take an action but don't require action to be taken, the owner can decide whether to take the action. Relevant circumstances for consideration include:

The seriousness of the offense

The effect on the community

The extent of participation by household members

The effect on uninvolved household members

The demand for assisted housing by families who will adhere to responsibilities

The extent to which leaseholder has shown personal responsibility and taken all reasonable steps to prevent or mitigate the offending action

The effect on the integrity of the program

### **Exclusion of culpable household member**

The owner may require a tenant to exclude a household member in order to continue to reside in the assisted unit.

## **Consideration of Rehabilitation**

When determining whether to terminate the tenancy for illegal drug use or alcohol abuse, the owner may consider whether the member:

- ¾ Is no longer participating
- ¾ Is successfully participating in a supervised drug or alcohol rehab program
- ¾ Has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehab program
- ¾ Has otherwise been successfully rehabilitated

The owner may require the tenant to submit evidence of any or all of the three (above).

Actions of termination by the owner must be consistent with the fair housing and equal opportunities as stated in 24 CFR 5.105.

The owner must provide the tenant a written notice specifying the grounds for termination of tenancy, at or before the commencement of the eviction action. The notice may be included in, or may be combined with, any owner eviction notice to the tenant.

The owner eviction notice means a notice to vacate, or a complaint, or other initial pleading used under State or local law to commence an eviction action.

Housing assistance payments are paid to the owner under the terms of the HAP contract. If the owner has begun eviction and the family continues to reside in the unit, the PHA must continue to make housing assistance payments to the owner until the owner has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the tenant or the tenant has moved out of the unit.

The PHA must continue making housing assistance payments to the owner in accordance with the contract as long as the tenant continues to occupy the unit and the contract is not violated. By endorsing the monthly check from the PHA, the owner certifies that the tenant is still in the unit, the rent is reasonable and the owner is in compliance with the contract.

If an eviction is not due to a serious or repeated violation of the lease, and if the PHA has no other grounds for termination of assistance, the PHA may issue a new voucher so that the family can move with continued assistance.

## **D. TERMINATION OF THE CONTRACT BY PHA**

[24 CFR 982.404(a), 982.453, 982.454, 982.552(a)(3)]

The HAP contract terminates when the lease terminates, when the PHA terminates program assistance for the family, and when the owner has breached the HAP contract. (See "Owner Disapproval and Restriction" chapter)

The PHA may also terminate the contract if:

- The PHA terminates assistance to the family.
- The family is required to move from a unit when the unit does not meet the HQS space standards because of an increase in family size or a change in family composition.
- Funding is no longer available under the ACC (see Chapter 15).

The contract will terminate automatically if 180 days have passed since the last housing assistance payment to the owner.

### **Notice of Termination**

When the PHA terminates the HAP contract under the violation of HQS space standards or when the PHA terminates assistance to the family, the PHA will provide the owner and family written notice of termination of the contract, and the HAP contract terminates at the end of the calendar month that follows the calendar month in which the PHA gives such notice to the owner.

## Chapter 15

### DENIAL OR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE

[24 CFR 5.902, 5.902, 5.903, 5.905, 982.4, 982.54, 982.454, 982.552, 982.553]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The PHA may deny or terminate assistance for a family because of the family's action or failure to act. The PHA will provide families with a written description of the family obligations under the program, the grounds under which the PHA can deny or terminate assistance, and the PHA's informal hearing procedures. This chapter describes when the PHA is required to deny or terminate assistance, and the PHA's policies for the denial of a new commitment of assistance and the grounds for termination of assistance under an outstanding HAP contract.

#### **A. GROUNDS FOR DENIAL/TERMINATION** [24 CFR 982.54, 982.552, 982.553]

If denial or termination is based upon behavior resulting from a disability, the PHA will delay the denial or termination in order to determine if there is an accommodation that would negate the behavior resulting from the disability.

#### **Form of Denial/Termination**

Denial of assistance for an applicant may include any or all of the following:

- Denial for placement on the PHA waiting list
- Denying or withdrawing a voucher
- Refusing to enter into a HAP contract or approve a tenancy
- Refusing to process or provide assistance under portability procedures

Termination of assistance for a participant may include any or all of the following:

- Refusing to enter into a HAP contract or approve a tenancy
- Terminating housing assistance payments under an outstanding HAP contract
- Refusing to process or provide assistance under portability procedures
- Refusing to issue a voucher for moving

**Mandatory Denial and Termination** [24 CFR 982.54 (d), 982.552(b), 982.553(a), 982.553(b)]

The PHA must deny assistance to applicants, and terminate assistance for participants if the family is under contract and 180 days have elapsed since the PHA's last housing assistance payment was made. (See "Contract Terminations" chapter.)

The PHA must permanently deny assistance to applicants, and terminate the assistance of persons convicted of manufacturing or producing methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.

The PHA must deny admission to the program for applicants, and terminate assistance for program participants if the PHA determines that any household member is currently engaging in illegal use of a drug. See section B of this chapter for the PHA's established standards.

The PHA must deny admission to the program for applicants, and terminate assistance for program participants if the PHA determines that it has reasonable cause to believe that a household member's illegal drug use or a pattern of illegal drug use may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents. See Section B of this chapter for the PHA's established standards.

The PHA must deny admission to an applicant if the PHA determines that any member of the household is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a State sex offender registration program. See section B of this chapter for the PHA's established standards regarding criminal background investigation and determining whether a member of the household is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a State sex offender registration program.

The PHA must terminate program assistance for a family evicted from housing assisted under the program for serious violation of the lease.

The PHA must deny admission to the program for an applicant or terminate program assistance for a participant if any member of the family fails to sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information in accordance with 24 CFR Part 5, subparts B and F.

The PHA must deny admission or terminate assistance when required under the regulations to establish citizenship or eligible immigration status.

**Grounds for Denial or Termination of Assistance** [24 CFR 982.552(c)]

The PHA will deny program assistance for an applicant, or terminate program assistance for a participant, for any of the following reasons:

- If any family member violates any family obligation under the program as listed in 24 CFR 982.551.

- If any family member has violated the family obligation under 24 CFR 982.551 not to engage in any drug-related criminal activity. See Section B of this chapter for the PHA's established standards.
- If any family member has violated the family obligation under 24 CFR 982.551 not to engage in any violent criminal activity.
- Any member of the family has been evicted from federally assisted housing in the last five years.
- If any member of the family commits fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program.
- The family currently owes rent or other amounts to the PHA or to another PHA in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act.
- The family has not reimbursed any PHA for amounts paid to an owner under a HAP contract for rent, damages to the unit, or other amounts owed by the family under the lease.
- The family breaches an agreement with a PHA to pay amounts owed to a PHA, or amounts paid to an owner by a PHA. The PHA at its discretion may offer the family the opportunity to enter into a repayment agreement. The PHA will prescribe the terms of the agreement. (See "Repayment Agreements" chapter.)
- If the family fails to fulfill its obligation under the Section 8 welfare-to-work voucher program.
- The family has engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior toward PHA personnel.
- "Abusive or violent behavior towards PHA personnel" includes verbal as well as physical abuse or violence. Use of expletives that are generally considered insulting, racial epithets, or other language, written or oral, that is customarily used to insult or intimidate, may be cause for termination or denial.
- "Threatening" refers to oral or written threats or physical gestures that communicate intent to abuse or commit violence.
- Actual physical abuse or violence will always be cause for termination.
- If any member of the family engages in, or has engaged in drug or alcohol abuse that interferes with the health, safety or peaceful enjoyment of other residents. See Section B of this chapter.

- If any member of the family commits drug-related criminal activity, or violent criminal activity. (See Section B of this chapter and 982.553 of the regulations)

Refer to "Eligibility for Admission" chapter, "Other Criteria for Admission" section for further information.

## **B. SCREENING AND TERMINATION FOR DRUG ABUSE AND OTHER CRIMINAL ACTIVITY**

### **Purpose**

All federally assisted housing is intended to provide a place to live and raise families, not a place to commit crime, to use or sell drugs or terrorize neighbors. It is the intention of West Valley Housing Authority to fully endorse and implement a policy designed to:

Help create and maintain a safe and drug-free community

Keep our program participants free from threats to their personal and family safety

Support parental efforts to instill values of personal responsibility and hard work

Help maintain an environment where children can live safely, learn and grow up to be productive citizens

Assist families in their vocational/educational goals in the pursuit of self-sufficiency

### **Administration**

All screening and termination of assistance procedures shall be administered fairly and in such a way as not to violate rights to privacy or discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality, religion, familial status, disability, sex or other legally protected groups.

To the maximum extent possible, the PHA will involve other community and governmental entities in the promotion and enforcement of this policy.

This policy will be posted on the PHA's website and copies made readily available to applicants and participants upon request.

### **Screening of Applicants**

In an effort to prevent future drug related and other criminal activity, as well as other patterns of behavior that pose a threat to the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents, and as required by 24 CFR 982, Subpart

L and CFR Part 5, Subpart J, the PHA will endeavor to screen applicants as thoroughly and fairly as possible for drug-related and violent criminal behavior.

Such screening will apply to any member of the household who is 18 years of age or older.

### **HUD Definitions**

*Covered person*, for purposes of 24 CFR Part 982 and this chapter, means a tenant, any member of the tenant's household, a guest or another person under the tenant's control.

*Drug* means a controlled substance as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802).

*Drug-related criminal activity* means the illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, or use of a drug, or the possession of a drug with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute or use the drug.

*Guest*, for purposes of this chapter and 24 CFR part 5, subpart A and 24 CFR Part 982, means a person temporarily staying in the unit with the consent of a tenant or other member of the household who has express or implied authority to so consent on behalf of the tenant. The requirements of part 982 apply to a guest as so defined.

*Household*, for the purposes of 24 CFR Part 982 and this chapter, means the family and PHA-approved live-in aide.

*Other person under the tenant's control*, for the purposes of the definition of *covered person* and for 24 CFR Parts 5 and 982 and for this chapter, means that the person, although not staying as a guest (as defined in this chapter) in the unit, is, or was at the time of the activity in question, on the premises because of an invitation from the tenant or other member of the household who has express or implied authority to so consent on behalf of the tenant. Absent evidence to the contrary, a person temporarily and infrequently on the premises solely for legitimate commercial purposes is not *under the tenant's control*.

*Violent criminal activity* means any criminal activity that has as one of its elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force substantial enough to cause, or be reasonably likely to cause, serious bodily injury or property damage.

### **Standard for Violation**

The PHA will deny participation in the program to applicants and terminate assistance to participants in cases where the PHA determines there is reasonable cause to believe that a household member is illegally using a drug or if the person abuses alcohol in a way that may interfere with the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents, including cases where the PHA determines that there is a pattern of illegal use of a drug or a pattern of alcohol abuse.

The PHA will consider the use of a controlled substance or alcohol to be a pattern if there is more than one incident during the previous six months.

“Engaged in or engaging in” violent criminal activity means any act within the past five years by an applicant or participant or household member which involved criminal activity that has as one of its elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force substantial enough to cause, or be reasonably likely to cause, serious bodily injury or property damage, which resulted in the arrest and/or conviction of the applicant, participant, or household member.

The activity is being engaged in by any family member.

The existence of the above-referenced behavior by any household member, regardless of the applicant or participant’s knowledge of the behavior, shall be grounds for denial or termination of assistance.

In evaluating evidence of negative past behavior, the PHA will give fair consideration to the seriousness of the activity with respect to how it would affect other residents, and/or likelihood of favorable conduct in the future which could be supported by evidence of rehabilitation.

### **Drug Related and Violent Criminal Activity**

Ineligibility for admission if Evicted for Drug-Related Activity: Persons evicted from federally assisted housing because of drug-related criminal activity are ineligible for admission to the Section 8 program for a five-year period beginning on the date of the last-such eviction.

Applicants, who have engaged in drug-related criminal activity, are ineligible for admission to the Section 8 program for a five-year period beginning on the date of the last incidence of criminal activity.

However, the household may be placed on the waiting list, after considering the individual circumstances of the household, if the PHA determines that:

- The household member who engaged in drug-related criminal activity has entered, and is successfully participating in, a supervised drug rehabilitation program approved by the PHA. The household will not be taken off the waiting list, and processed for a Voucher, until such time as the household member has COMPLETED the rehabilitation program and can document such completion.
- The circumstances leading to eviction no longer exist because:
  - The criminal household member has died.
  - The criminal household member is imprisoned.

- The above waiver of denial **DOES NOT** extend to household members having been previously involved in any manufacturing or delivery of a controlled substance. For these types of activities, denial of assistance will be made for the full five (5) years from the last engagement in prohibited activity.
- The PHA will **permanently** deny assistance to applicants, and terminate the assistance of persons convicted of manufacturing or producing methamphetamine on or off the premises of federally assisted housing without waiver ability.

Applicants will be denied assistance if they have been:

**arrested** for violent criminal activity within the last **five years** prior to the date of the certification interview.

### **Denial of Assistance for Sex Offenders**

The PHA will deny admission if any member of the household is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a State sex offender registration program. In screening applicants, the PHA will perform criminal history background checks to determine whether any household member is subject to a lifetime sex offender registration requirement.

### **Termination of Assistance for Participants**

#### **Termination of Assistance for Drug-related Criminal Activity or Violent Criminal Activity:**

Under the family obligations listed at 24 CFR 982.551, the members of the household must not engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. HUD regulations at 24 CFR 982.553(b) require the PHA to establish standards for termination of assistance when this family obligation is violated. The West Valley Housing Authority has established the following standards for termination of assistance for the family when a household member has violated the family obligation to refrain from participating in drug-related or violent criminal activity.

Assistance will be terminated for participants who have been:

**arrested** for drug-related or violent criminal activity during participation in the program, and within the last five years prior to the date of the notice to terminate assistance.

If any member of the household violates the family obligations by engaging in drug-related or violent criminal activity, the PHA will terminate assistance.

In appropriate cases, the PHA may permit the family to continue receiving assistance provided that family members determined to have engaged in the proscribed activities will not reside in the unit. If the violating member is a minor, the PHA may consider individual circumstances with the advice of Juvenile Court officials.

The PHA may waive the termination of assistance for drug-related criminal activity if:

The person demonstrates successful participation and completion of a credible rehabilitation program approved by the PHA, or

- The circumstances leading to the violation no longer exist because the person who engaged in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity is no longer in the household due to death or incarceration;
- This waiver authority will not be used in cases where person(s) have engaged in drug-related criminal activity related to manufacturing or delivery of a controlled substance.
- The PHA will permanently deny assistance to applicants, and terminate the assistance of persons convicted of manufacturing or producing methamphetamine on or off the premises of federally assisted housing without waiver ability.

### **Terminating Assistance for Alcohol Abuse by Household Members**

Under the family obligations listed at 24 CFR 982.551, the members of the household must not abuse alcohol in a way that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. Assistance will be terminated due to violation of a family obligation if the PHA determines that a member of the household has demonstrated a pattern of alcohol abuse that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.

Assistance will be terminated if a household member is arrested for any alcohol-related criminal activity on or near the premises within any 12 month period.

In appropriate cases, the PHA may permit the family to continue receiving assistance provided that household members determined to have engaged in the proscribed activities will not reside in the unit. If the violating member is a minor, the PHA may consider individual circumstances with the advice of Juvenile Court officials.

### **Notice of Termination of Assistance**

In any case where the PHA decides to terminate assistance to the family, the PHA must give the family written notice, which states:

- The reason(s) for the proposed termination,

- The effective date of the proposed termination,
- The family's right, if they disagree, to request an Informal Hearing to be held before termination of assistance.
- The date by which a request for an informal hearing must be received by the PHA.

If the PHA proposes to terminate assistance for criminal activity as shown by a criminal record, the PHA will provide the subject of the record and the tenant with a copy of the criminal record.

The PHA will simultaneously provide written notice of the contract termination to the owner so that it will coincide with the Termination of Assistance.

### **Required Evidence**

*Preponderance of evidence* is defined as evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence which as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not. The intent is not to prove criminal liability, but to establish that the act(s) occurred. Preponderance of evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence.

*Credible evidence* may be obtained from police and/or court records. Testimony from neighbors, when combined with other factual evidence can be considered credible evidence. Other credible evidence includes documentation of drug raids or arrest warrants.

The PHA will terminate assistance for criminal activity by a household member, as described in this chapter, if the PHA determines, based on a preponderance of the evidence, that the household member has engaged in the activity, regardless of whether the household member has been arrested or convicted for such activity.

The PHA will pursue fact-finding efforts as needed to obtain credible evidence.

### **Confidentiality of Criminal Records**

The PHA will ensure that any criminal record (other than public records available to the general public) received is maintained confidentially, not misused or improperly disseminated, and destroyed once the purpose for which it was requested is accomplished.

All criminal reports (other than public records available to the general public), while needed, will be housed in a locked file with access limited to individuals responsible for

screening and determining eligibility for initial and continued assistance and to upper level Section 8 management.

If the family is determined eligible for initial or continued assistance, any non-public record criminal report shall be shredded as soon as the information is no longer needed for eligibility or continued assistance determination.

If the family's assistance is denied or terminated, any non-public criminal record information shall be shredded immediately upon completion of the review or hearing procedures and a final decision has been made.

The PHA will document in the family's file the circumstances of the criminal report and the date the report was destroyed.

### **C. FAMILY OBLIGATIONS** [24 CFR 982.551]

The family must supply any information that the PHA or HUD determines is necessary in the administration of the program, including submission of required evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status (as provided by 24 CFR 982.551). "Information" includes any requested certification, release or other documentation.

The family must supply any information requested by the PHA or HUD for use in a regularly scheduled reexamination or interim reexamination of family income and composition in accordance with HUD requirements.

The family must disclose and verify Social Security Numbers (as provided by 24 CFR 5.216) and must sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information in accordance with 24 CFR 5.230.

All information supplied by the family must be true and complete.

The family is responsible for an HQS breach caused by the family as described in 982.404(b).

The family must allow the PHA to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice.

The family may not commit any serious or repeated violations of the lease.

The family must notify the owner and, at the same time, notify the PHA before the family moves out of the unit or terminates the lease upon notice to the owner.

The family must promptly give the PHA a copy of any owner eviction notice.

The family must use the assisted unit for residence by the family. The unit must be the family's only residence.

The composition of the assisted family, residing in the unit, must be approved by the PHA. The family must promptly inform the PHA of the birth, adoption or court-awarded custody of a child. The family must request PHA approval to add any other family member as an occupant of the unit.

The family must promptly notify the PHA if any family member no longer resides in the unit.

If the PHA has given approval, a foster child or a live-in aide may reside in the unit. If the family does not request approval or PHA approval is denied, the family may not allow a foster child or live-in aide to reside with the assisted family.

Members of the household may engage in legal profit-making activities in the unit with authorization of the landlord, but only if such activities are incidental to primary use of the unit as a residence by members of the family.

The family must not sublease or let the unit.

The family must not assign the lease or transfer the unit.

The family must supply any information or certification requested by the PHA to verify that the family is living in the unit, or relating to family absence from the unit, including any PHA-requested information or certification on the purposes of family absences. The family must cooperate with the PHA for this purpose. The family must promptly notify the PHA of absence from the unit.

The family must not own or have any interest in the unit.

The members of the family must not commit fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any Federal housing program.

The household members may not engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. The members of the household must not abuse alcohol in a way that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. An assisted family, or members of the family, may not receive Section 8 tenant-based assistance while receiving another housing subsidy, for the same unit or for a different unit, under any duplicative (as determined by HUD or in accordance with HUD requirements) federal, State or local housing assistance program.

**Housing Authority Discretion** [24 CFR 982.552(c)]

In deciding whether to deny or terminate assistance because of action or failure to act by members of the family, the PHA has discretion to consider all of the circumstances in each case, including the seriousness of the case. The PHA will use its discretion in reviewing the extent of participation or culpability of individual family members and the

length of time since the violation occurred. The PHA may also review the family's more recent history and record of compliance and the effects that denial or termination of assistance may have on other family members who were not involved in the action or failure to act.

The PHA may impose, as a condition of continued assistance for other family members, a requirement that family members who participated in, or were culpable for the action or failure to act, will not reside in the unit. The PHA may permit the other members of a family to continue in the program.

## **Enforcing Family Obligations**

### Explanations and Terms

The term "promptly" when used with the family obligations always means "within seven days." Denial or termination of assistance is always optional except where this Plan or the regulations state otherwise.

### HQS Breach

The PHA inspector will determine if an HQS breach as identified in 24 CFR 982.404 (b) is the responsibility of the family. Families may be given extensions to cure HQS breaches by either the Executive Director or Section 8 and Occupancy Manager.

### Lease Violations

The following criteria will be used to decide if a serious or repeated violation of the lease will result in termination of assistance:

- If the owner terminates tenancy through court action for serious or repeated violation of the lease.
- If the owner notifies the family of termination of tenancy assistance for serious or repeated lease violations, and the family moves from the unit prior to the completion of court action, and the PHA determines that the cause is a serious or repeated violation of the lease based on available evidence.
- If there are police reports, neighborhood complaints or other third party information documenting serious or repeated lease violations that has been verified by the PHA.
- Nonpayment of rent is considered a serious violation of the lease.
- Causing intentional destruction to the property or causing excessive damage to the property due to lack of care, failure to maintain the property and/or failure to notify the owner of needed repairs that caused extensive damage due to the delay in reporting needed repairs.

### Notification of Eviction

If the family requests assistance to move and they did not notify the PHA of an eviction within seven days of receiving the Notice of Lease Termination, the move will be denied.

### Proposed Additions to the Family

The PHA will deny a family's request to add additional family members who are:

- $\frac{3}{4}$  Persons who have been evicted from public housing.
- $\frac{3}{4}$  Persons who have previously violated a family obligation listed in 24 CFR 982.51 of the HUD regulations.
- $\frac{3}{4}$  Persons who have been part of a family whose assistance has been terminated under the Certificate or Voucher program.
- $\frac{3}{4}$  Persons who commit drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity. See Section B of this chapter for the PHA's established standards.
- $\frac{3}{4}$  Persons who do not meet the PHA's definition of family.
- $\frac{3}{4}$  Persons who commit fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program.
- $\frac{3}{4}$  Persons who currently owe rent or other amounts to the PHA or to another PHA in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act.
- $\frac{3}{4}$  Persons who have engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior toward PHA personnel.

### Family Member Moves Out

Families are required to notify the PHA if any family member leaves the assisted household. When the family notifies the PHA, they must furnish the following information:

- $\frac{3}{4}$  The date the family member moved out.
- $\frac{3}{4}$  The new address, if known, of the family member.
- $\frac{3}{4}$  A statement as to whether the family member is temporarily or permanently absent.

### Limitation on Profit-Making Activity in Unit

If the PHA determines that the use of the unit as a business is not incidental to its use as a dwelling unit, it will be considered a program violation.

If the PHA determines the business is not legal, it will be considered a program violation.

If the PHA determines that the business activity is not in violation of the above conditions and the landlord has given written authorization for the family to operate the profit-making activity in the assisted property, the family will not be considered in violation of the lease.

### Interest in Unit

The owner may not reside in the assisted unit regardless of whether (s)he is a member of the assisted family, unless the family owns the mobile home and rents the pad.

### Fraud

In each case, the PHA will consider which family members were involved, the circumstances, and any hardship that might be caused to innocent members.

## **D. PROCEDURES FOR NON-CITIZENS** [24 CFR 5.514, 5.516, 5.518]

### **Denial or Termination due to Ineligible Immigrant Status**

Applicant or participant families in which all members are neither U.S. citizens nor eligible immigrants are not eligible for assistance and must have their assistance terminated. The PHA must offer the family an opportunity for a hearing. (See "Eligibility for Admission" chapter, section on Citizenship/Eligible Immigration Status.)

Assistance may not be terminated while verification of the participant family's eligible immigration status is pending.

### **False or Incomplete Information**

When the PHA has clear, concrete, or substantial documentation (such as a permanent resident card or information from another agency) that contradicts the declaration of citizenship made by an applicant or participant, an investigation will be conducted and the individual will be given an opportunity to present relevant information.

If the individual is unable to verify their citizenship, the PHA will give him/her an opportunity to provide a new declaration as an eligible immigrant or an opportunity to elect not to contend their status.

The PHA will then verify eligible status, deny, terminate, or prorate as applicable.

The PHA will deny or terminate assistance based on the submission of false information or misrepresentation.

### **Procedure for Denial or Termination**

If the family (or any member) claimed eligible immigrant status and the INS primary and secondary verifications failed to document the status, the family may make an appeal to the INS and request a hearing with the PHA either after the INS appeal or in lieu of the INS appeal.

After the PHA has made a determination of ineligibility, the family will be notified of the determination and the reasons and informed of the option for prorated assistance (if applicable).

### **E. ZERO (\$0) ASSISTANCE TENANCIES** [24 CFR 982.455 (a)]

The family may remain in the unit at \$0 assistance for up to 180 days after the last HAP payment. If the family is still in the unit after 180 days, the assistance will be terminated. If, within the 180-day timeframe, an owner rent increase or a decrease in the Total Tenant Payment causes the family to be eligible for a housing assistance payment, the PHA will resume assistance payments for the family.

In order for a family to move to another unit during the 180 days, the rent for the new unit would have to be high enough to necessitate a housing assistance payment.

### **F. OPTION NOT TO TERMINATE FOR MISREPRESENTATION**

[24 CFR 982.551, 982.552(c)]

If the family has misrepresented any facts that caused the PHA to overpay assistance, the PHA may choose not to terminate and may offer to continue assistance provided that the family executes a Repayment Agreement and makes payments in accordance with the agreement or reimburses the PHA in full within 30 calendar days.

### **G. MISREPRESENTATION IN COLLUSION WITH OWNER**

[24 CFR 982.551, 982.552 (c)]

If the family intentionally, willingly, and knowingly commits fraud or is involved in any other illegal scheme with the owner, the PHA will deny or terminate assistance.

In making this determination, the PHA will carefully consider the possibility of overt or implied intimidation of the family by the owner and the family's understanding of the events.

## **H. MISSED APPOINTMENTS AND DEADLINES** [24 CFR 982.551, 982.552 (c)]

It is a Family Obligation to supply information, documentation, and certification as needed for the PHA to fulfill its responsibilities. The PHA schedules appointments and sets deadlines in order to obtain the required information. The Obligations also require that the family allow the PHA to inspect the unit, and appointments are made for this purpose.

An applicant or participant who fails to keep an appointment, or to supply information required by a deadline without notifying the PHA, may be sent a Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance for failure to provide required information, or for failure to allow the PHA to inspect the unit.

The family will be given information about the requirement to keep appointments and the number of times appointments will be rescheduled, as specified in this Plan.

Appointments will be scheduled and time requirements will be imposed for the following events and circumstances:

- Eligibility for Admissions

- Verification Procedures

- Voucher Issuance and Briefings

- Housing Quality Standards Inspections

- Recertifications

- Appeals

Acceptable reasons for missing appointments or failing to provide information by deadlines are:

- Medical emergency

- Incarceration

- Family emergency

### **Procedure when Appointments are Missed or Information not Provided**

For most purposes in this Plan, the family will be given two opportunities before being issued a notice of termination or denial for breach of a family obligation.

After issuance of the termination notice, if the family offers to correct the breach within the time allowed to request a hearing:

The termination will be rescinded only after the family cures the breach.

The notice will not be rescinded even if the family offers to cure the breach if this is a repeat offense.

The notice will be rescinded if the family offers to cure and the family does not have a history of non-compliance.

#### **I. INSUFFICIENT FUNDING** [24 CFR 982.454 and 24 CFR 982.314(e)(1)]

The PHA may terminate the HAP contract if the PHA determines, in accordance with HUD guidelines, that budget authority funding under the ACC is insufficient to support continued assistance for all families currently participating in the program.

##### Determination of Insufficient Funding:

The PHA will determine whether there is adequate funding to continue subsidizing current participant families by comparing the PHA's annual budget authority to the annual total HAP needs for the remaining period of the funding year using the most current month's average HAP costs. If the total annual HAP needs EXCEED the annual budget authority (estimated if not known), the PHA will be considered to have insufficient funding and can proceed with action to terminate HAP contracts.

In addition, if the PHA is over-leased (exceeding the HUD-approved baseline number of units) and the projection of participants dropping off assistance would not be sufficient to get down to the PHA's HUD-approved annual baseline number of unit months leased for the funding period, the PHA will be considered to have insufficient funding. This determination is based upon the HUD-required limitations that the PHA cannot use the HAP budget authority for over-leasing. Therefore, there is no funding provided by HUD for any annual over-leasing regardless of the PHA's annual budget authority. Projection of annual over-leasing for the PHA will be considered insufficient funding and the PHA can proceed with action to terminate HAP contracts.

In the event the PHA must terminate HAP contracts due to insufficient funding, the PHA will do so in accordance with the following criteria and instructions:

Households that include either a disabled or elderly family member will be protected from termination of assistance;

Households who have a signed FSS Contract of Participation, and who are active in the FSS Program, will be protected from termination of assistance;

Any single non-elderly/non-disabled household being assisted on the program will be the first households terminated;

If additional terminations are needed, the remaining participant families will be terminated based on a "FIRST-ON, FIRST-OFF" basis (i.e. starting with families that have been on the program the longest) up to the number of terminations determined by the PHA to alleviate the insufficient funding issue.

Families who are terminated due to insufficient funding will be invited to reapply for Voucher assistance. A Local Preference will then be given to the families which will assist them with re-entering the program once the insufficient funding issue has been resolved.

## Chapter 16

### OWNER DISAPPROVAL AND RESTRICTION

[24 CFR 982.54, 982.306, 982.453]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

It is the policy of the PHA to recruit owners to participate in the voucher program. The PHA will provide owners with prompt and professional service in order to maintain an adequate supply of available housing throughout the jurisdiction of the PHA. The regulations define when the PHA must disallow an owner participation in the program, and they provide the PHA discretion to disapprove or otherwise restrict the participation of owners in certain categories. This chapter describes the criteria for owner disapproval, and the various penalties for owner violations.

#### **A. DISAPPROVAL OF OWNER** [24 CFR 982.306, 982.54(d)(8)]

The owner does not have a right to participate in the program. For purposes of this section, "owner" includes a principal or other interested party.

The PHA will disapprove the owner for the following reasons:

1. HUD has informed the PHA that the owner has been disbarred, suspended, or subject to a limited denial of participation under 24 CFR part 24.
2. HUD has informed the PHA that the Federal government has instituted an administrative or judicial action against the owner for violation of the Fair Housing Act or other Federal equal opportunity requirements and such action is pending.
3. HUD has informed the PHA that a court or administrative agency has determined that the owner has violated the Fair Housing Act or other Federal equal opportunity requirements.
4. Unless their lease was effective prior to June 17, 1998, the owner may not be a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother of any family member. The PHA will waive this restriction as a reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with a disability.

In cases where the owner and tenant bear the same last name, the PHA may, at its discretion, require the family and or owner to certify whether they are related to each other in any way.

5. The owner has violated obligations under a housing assistance payments contract under Section 8 of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437f).
6. The owner has committed fraud, bribery or any other corrupt act in connection with any Federal housing program.
7. The owner has a history or practice of non-compliance with the HQS for units leased under the tenant-based programs or with applicable housing standards for units leased with project-based Section 8 assistance or leased under any other Federal housing program.
8. The owner has a history or practice of renting units that fail to meet State or local housing codes.
9. The owner has a history or practice of failing to terminate tenancy of tenants of units assisted under Section 8 or any other federally assisted housing program for activity by the tenant, any member of the household, a guest or another person under the control of any member of the household that:
  - Threatens the right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents;
  - Threatens the health or safety of other residents, of employees of the PHA, or of owner employees or other persons engaged in management of the housing.
  - Threatens the health or safety of, or the right to peaceful enjoyment of their residences, by persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises; or
  - Is involved in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity.
10. The owner has failed to comply with regulations, the mortgage or note, or the regulatory agreement for projects with mortgages insured by HUD or loans made by HUD.

**B. OWNER RESTRICTIONS AND PENALTIES** [ 24 CFR 982.453]

If an owner has committed fraud or abuse or is guilty of frequent or serious contract violations, the PHA will restrict the owner from future participation in the program for a period of time commensurate with the seriousness of the offense. The PHA may also terminate some or all contracts with the owner.

Before imposing any penalty against an owner the PHA will review all relevant factors pertaining to the case, and will consider such factors as the owner's record of compliance and the number of violations.

See Program Integrity Addendum for guidance as to how owner fraud will be handled.

### **C. CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP**

A change in ownership does not require execution of a new contract and lease. However, it does require an assignment of the contract and lease to the new owner.

The PHA may approve the assignment of the HAP contract. The PHA may approve the assignment, since they are a party to the contract. The PHA may deny approval of assignment of the contract, for any of the reasons listed in Section A. of this chapter.

The PHA will process a change of ownership only upon the request of the new owner and only if accompanied by a copy of the escrow statement or other document showing the transfer of title, recorded deed and the employee identification number or social security number of the new owner as noted on the required W-9 and Payee forms.

The PHA must receive a written request by the old owner in order to change the HAP payee and/or the address to which payment is to be sent or the information can be documented that such request is coming from the old owner.

If the new owner does not want an assignment of the contract, the PHA will terminate the HAP contract with the old owner, since they are no longer the owner. The new owner may offer the family a new assisted lease. The family may elect to enter into the new lease or move to another unit.

## Chapter 17

### **CLAIMS, MOVE-OUT AND CLOSE-OUT INSPECTIONS (For HAP Contracts Effective Before October 2, 1995)**

#### **INFORMATION**

This chapter has been removed.

The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 provided that families assisted under the pre-merger certificate program would be transferred to the Housing Choice Voucher Program no later than the second annual reexamination on or after the merger date (October 1, 1999). Families assisted under the pre-merger voucher program were transferred to the Housing Choice Voucher Program as of October 1, 1999. Under pre-merger voucher contracts, owner claims against the PHA were limited to the amount the owner was allowed to collect as the family's security deposit. This meant that the amount the owner could collect from the PHA was zero.

Under the Housing Choice Voucher Program, the PHA is not responsible for owner claims against the family. If the security deposit is not sufficient to cover amounts the family owes under the lease, the owner may collect the balance from the family.

## Chapter 18

### OWNER OR FAMILY DEBTS TO THE PHA

[24 CFR 982.552]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the PHA's policies for the recovery of monies, which have been overpaid for families, and to owners. It describes the methods that will be utilized for collection of monies and the guidelines for different types of debts. It is the PHA's policy to meet the informational needs of owners and families, and to communicate the program rules in order to avoid owner and family debts. Before a debt is assessed against a family or owner, the file must contain documentation to support the PHA's claim that the debt is owed. The file must further contain written documentation of the method of calculation, in a clear format for review by the owner, the family or other interested parties.

When families or owners owe money to the PHA, the PHA will make every effort to collect it. The PHA will use a variety of collection tools to recover debts including, but not limited to:

Requests for lump sum payments

Civil suits

Repayment agreements

Abatements

Reductions in HAP to owner

Collection agencies

Withhold amounts due from HAP for other families (for amounts due from owner)

#### **A. REPAYMENT AGREEMENT FOR FAMILIES** [24 CFR 982.552 (c)(v-vii)]

A Repayment Agreement as used in this Plan is a document entered into between the PHA and a person who owes a debt to the PHA. It is similar to a promissory note, but contains more details regarding the nature of the debt, the terms of payment, any

special provisions of the agreement, and the remedies available to the PHA upon default of the agreement.

The PHA will prescribe the terms of the repayment agreement, including determining whether to enter into a repayment agreement with the family based on the circumstances surrounding the debt to the PHA.

There are some circumstances in which the PHA will not enter into a repayment agreement. They are:

If the family already has a Repayment Agreement in place.

If the PHA determines that the family committed program fraud and the PHA determines that the actions of the family imply or indicate that the fraud was intentional or if it was a repeat offense. (See Section C. Debts Due To Misrepresentations or Non-Reporting of Information.)

The person(s) owing the debt would be required to make a down payment on the debt, acceptable to the PHA, to enter into a repayment agreement. The combination of the down payment and the monthly payments would generally be required to fully repay the debt within twelve months. Any repayment agreement that would necessitate a time period beyond twelve months would have to be authorized by the Executive Director or Section 8 and Occupancy Supervisor.

The minimum monthly payment for any repayment agreement is generally \$25.00 unless the total balance is in excess of \$300.00. Then, the general rule is the amount that would allow the entire balance to be paid in a twelve month period would be the required minimum monthly payment.

## **B. DEBTS OWED FOR CLAIMS** [24 CFR 792.103, 982.552 (c)(v-vii)]

If a family owes money to the PHA for claims paid to an owner:

The PHA will review the circumstances resulting in the overpayment and decide whether the family must pay the full amount or whether a repayment agreement will be permitted.

### **Repayment Agreement Default**

The Repayment Agreement will be considered to be in default if two monthly payments have failed to be paid within the due dates of those payments.

If the family's repayment agreement is in default, and the family has not contacted or made arrangements with the PHA, the PHA will:

Require the family to pay the balance in full, or

Terminate the family's housing assistance.

If the family requests a move to another unit and has a repayment agreement in place for the repayment of an owner claim, and the repayment agreement is not in arrears:

The family will be required to pay the balance in full prior to the issuance of a voucher for moving.

If the family requests a move to another unit and is in arrears on a repayment agreement for the repayment of an owner claim:

The family will be required to pay the balance in full, or be terminated from the program.

### **C. DEBTS DUE TO MISREPRESENTATIONS OR NON-REPORTING OF INFORMATION** [24 CFR 982.163]

HUD's definition of program fraud and abuse is a single act or pattern of actions that:

Constitutes false statement, omission, or concealment of a substantive fact, made with intent to deceive or mislead, and that results in payment of Section 8 program funds in violation of Section 8 program requirements.

#### **Family Error/Late Reporting or Program Fraud**

Any family that the PHA determines to have misrepresented family income, assets, household composition, or allowances; or to have failed to report a change in family composition or income as required in this Plan, may be terminated from the program and/or may be required to repay all monies due the PHA from the overpayment of housing assistance, as calculated by the PHA. The determination of which action or whether a combined action is appropriate shall be the decision of the PHA. The PHA will take the following into consideration for the determination of action to be taken:

1. Whether this is a first occurrence for such misrepresentation or failure to report;
2. The length of time over which the overpaid assistance developed;
3. Whether the family declared the unreported change at the next re-exam;

4. Whether the family failed to disclose income or assets or purposely claimed allowances to which they were not entitled, at one or more re-exams; and,
5. The PHA's method of discovery (examples: family member came forward and made a self declaration or the discovery was via another non-family member or an outside party).

If a family owes an amount which equals or exceeds \$10,000.00 as a result of program fraud, the case will be referred to the Inspector General. Where appropriate, the PHA will refer the case for criminal prosecution.

### **Repayment Procedures for Program Fraud**

If the PHA has determined that the circumstances were not intentional or there were extenuating circumstances that warrant allowing the family to repay the overpaid assistance, the repayment procedures will be in accordance with the guidelines in the Repayment Agreement Section of this Chapter.

### **D. DEBTS DUE TO MINIMUM RENT TEMPORARY HARDSHIP**

Minimum rent arrears that are less than \$50.00 will be required to be paid in full the first month following the end of the minimum rent period.

The minimum monthly amount for a repayment agreement incurred for minimum rent arrears is \$25.00.

The PHA will not enter into a repayment agreement that will take more than 12 months to pay off.

### **E. GUIDELINES FOR REPAYMENT AGREEMENTS** [24 CFR 982.552(c)(v-vii)]

Repayment agreements will be executed between the PHA and all the adults included in the household.

Payments may only be made by money order or cashier's check.

Repayment agreements will be considered in default when two (2) payments are delinquent. When the repayment agreement is in default, no further repayment agreements will be renegotiated and all monies are due in full.

Monthly payments may be decreased in cases of family hardship and if requested with reasonable notice from the family, verification of the hardship, and the approval of the Executive Director or Section 8 and Occupancy Manager.

No move will be approved until the debt is paid in full unless the move is the result of the following causes, and the repayment agreement is current:

Family size exceeds the HQS maximum occupancy standards

The HAP contract is terminated due to owner non-compliance or opt-out

A natural disaster

#### **E. OWNER DEBTS TO THE PHA** [24 CFR 982.453(b)]

If the PHA determines that the owner has retained housing assistance or claim payments the owner is not entitled to, the PHA may reclaim the amounts from future housing assistance or claim payments owed the owner for any units under contract.

If future housing assistance or claim payments are insufficient to reclaim the amounts owed, the PHA will:

Require the owner to pay the amount in full within 30 days.

Pursue collections through the local court system.

Restrict the owner from future participation.

#### **G. WRITING OFF DEBTS**

Debts will be written off if:

The debtor's whereabouts are unknown and the debt is more than ten years old.

A determination is made that the debtor is judgment proof.

The debtor is deceased.

The debtor is confined to an institution indefinitely.

## Chapter 19

### COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The informal hearing requirements defined in HUD regulation are applicable to participating families who disagree with an action, decision, or inaction of the PHA. This chapter describes the policies, procedures and standards to be used when families disagree with a PHA decision. The procedures and requirements are explained for preference denial meetings, informal reviews and hearings. It is the policy of the PHA to ensure that all families have the benefit of all protections due to them under the law.

#### **A. COMPLAINTS TO THE PHA**

The PHA will respond promptly to complaints from families, owners, employees, and members of the public. All complaints will be documented. HQS complaints may be reported by telephone. The PHA has a "Request for Resolution" form to be used for complaints of dissatisfaction and such complaints will follow the "Issue Resolution Procedures for Clients". (See attached Exhibit at the end of this Chapter) As noted in the "Issue Resolution Procedures for Clients", this "Request for Resolution" is not to be used to address any housing eligibility, income and rent calculation, lease issues, or other housing policy issues. For those issues, Section 8 applicants would use the procedures outlined under Section C. Informal Review Procedures for Applicants and Section 8 participants would use the procedures outlined under Section D. Informal Hearing Procedures.

The PHA informal hearing procedures will be provided to families in the briefing packet.

#### **B. PREFERENCE DENIALS**

When the PHA denies a preference to an applicant, the family will be notified of the specific reason for the denial and offered the opportunity for a meeting with PHA staff to discuss the reasons for the denial and to dispute the PHA's decision.

The person who conducts the meeting will be:

The Section 8 and Occupancy Manager.

**C. INFORMAL REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR APPLICANTS**  
[24 CFR 982.54(d)(12), 982.554]

Reviews are provided for applicants who are denied assistance before the effective date of the HAP contract. The exception is that when an applicant is denied assistance for citizenship or eligible immigrant status, the applicant is entitled to an informal hearing.

When the PHA determines that an applicant is ineligible for the program, the family must be notified of their ineligibility in writing. The notice must contain:

The reason(s) they are ineligible,

The procedure for requesting a review if the applicant does not agree with the decision and

The time limit for requesting a review.

When denying admission for criminal activity as shown by a criminal record, the PHA will provide the subject of the record and the applicant with a copy of the criminal record upon which the decision to deny was based.

The PHA must provide applicants with the opportunity for an informal review of decisions denying:

Qualification for preference

Listing on the PHA's waiting list

Issuance of a voucher

Participation in the program

Assistance under portability procedures

Informal reviews are not required for established policies and procedures and PHA determinations such as:

Discretionary administrative determinations by the PHA

General policy issues or class grievances

A determination of the family unit size under the PHA subsidy standards

Refusal to extend or suspend a voucher

A PHA determination not to grant approval of the tenancy

Determination that unit is not in compliance with HQS

Determination that unit is not in accordance with HQS due to family size or composition

### **Procedure for Review**

A request for an informal review must be received **in writing** by the close of the business day, no later than ten (10) days from the date of the PHA's notification of denial of assistance. The informal review will be scheduled promptly, generally within ten (10) working days.

The informal review may not be conducted by the person who made or approved the decision under review, nor a subordinate of such person.

The review may be conducted by any person designated by the PHA other than the person who made or approved the decision under review, or a subordinate of such person.

The applicant will be given the option of presenting oral or written objections to the decision. Both the PHA and the family may present evidence and witnesses. The family may use an attorney or other representative to assist them at their own expense.

The review may be conducted by mail and/or telephone if acceptable to both parties.

A notice of the review findings will be provided in writing to the applicant promptly by the review officer. It shall include the decision of the review officer, and an explanation of the reasons for the decision.

All requests for a review, supporting documentation, and a copy of the final decision will be retained in the family's file.

### **D. INFORMAL HEARING PROCEDURES** [24 CFR 982.555(a-f), 982.54(d)(13)]

When the PHA makes a decision regarding the eligibility and/or the amount of assistance, applicants and participants must be notified in writing. The PHA will give the family prompt notice of such determinations which will include:

The proposed action or decision of the PHA

The date the proposed action or decision will take place

The family's right to an explanation of the basis for the PHA's decision

The procedures for requesting a hearing if the family disputes the action or decision

The time limit for requesting the hearing

When terminating assistance for criminal activity as shown by a criminal record, the PHA will provide the subject of the record and the tenant/participant with a copy of the criminal record upon which the decision to terminate was based.

The PHA must provide participants with the opportunity for an informal hearing for decisions related to any of the following PHA determinations:

Determination of the family's annual or adjusted income and the computation of the housing assistance payment

Appropriate utility allowance used from schedule

Family unit size determination under PHA subsidy standards

Determination to terminate assistance for any reason

Determination to terminate a family's FSS contract, withhold supportive services, or propose forfeiture of the family's escrow account

The PHA must always provide the opportunity for an informal hearing before termination of assistance.

Informal hearings are not required for established policies and procedures and PHA determinations such as:

Discretionary administrative determinations by the PHA

General policy issues or class grievances

Establishment of the PHA schedule of utility allowances for families in the program

A PHA determination not to approve an extension or suspension of a voucher term

A PHA determination not to approve a unit or lease

A PHA determination that an assisted unit is not in compliance with HQS (PHA must provide hearing for family breach of HQS because that is a family obligation determination)

A PHA determination that the unit is not in accordance with HQS because of the family size

A PHA determination to exercise or not exercise any right or remedy against the owner under a HAP contract

### **Notification of Hearing**

It is the PHA's objective to resolve disputes at the lowest level possible, and to make every effort to avoid the most severe remedies. However, if this is not possible, the PHA will ensure that applicants and participants will receive all of the protections and rights afforded by the law and the regulations.

When the PHA receives a request for an informal hearing, a hearing shall be scheduled promptly, generally within ten (10) working days. The notification of hearing will contain:

The date and time of the hearing

The location where the hearing will be held

The family's right to bring evidence, witnesses, legal or other representation at the family's expense

The right to view any documents or evidence in the possession of the PHA upon which the PHA based the proposed action and, at the family's expense, to obtain a copy of such documents prior to the hearing. Requests for such documents or evidence must be received no later than three days before the hearing date.

A notice to the family that the PHA will request a copy of any documents or evidence the family will use at the hearing.

## **The PHA's Hearing Procedures**

After a hearing date has been scheduled, the family may request to reschedule provided that they contact the individual hearing officer directly to reschedule. Once the hearing has been rescheduled to meet the convenience of the family, the hearing will rescheduled a second time only upon showing "good cause," which is defined as an unavoidable conflict which seriously affects the health, safety or welfare of the family.

If the family fails to attend the hearing and failed to contact the hearing officer to reschedule the hearing, the hearing office will complete a hearing decision upon the evidence available to the hearing officer.

Families have the right to:

Present written or oral objections to the PHA's determination.

Examine the documents in the file which are the basis for the PHA's action, and all documents submitted to the Hearing Officer;

Copy any relevant documents at their expense;

Present any information or witnesses pertinent to the issue of the hearing;

Request that PHA staff be available or present at the hearing to answer questions pertinent to the case; and

Be represented by legal counsel, advocate, or other designated representative at their own expense.

If the family requests copies of documents relevant to the hearing, the PHA will make the copies for the family and assess a charge of \$.10 per page per copy. In no case will the family be allowed to remove the file from the PHA's office.

In addition to other rights contained in this Chapter, the PHA has a right to:

Present evidence and any information pertinent to the issue of the hearing;

Be notified if the family intends to be represented by legal counsel, advocate, or another party;

Examine and copy any documents to be used by the family prior to the hearing;

Have its attorney present; and

Have staff persons and other witnesses familiar with the case present.

The informal hearing shall be conducted by the Hearing Officer appointed by the PHA who is neither the person who made or approved the decision, nor a subordinate of that person. The PHA appoints hearing officers who:

Are PHA management or Are managers from other PHAs

The hearing shall concern only the issues for which the family has received the opportunity for hearing. Evidence presented at the hearing may be considered without regard to admissibility under the rules of evidence applicable to judicial proceedings.

No documents may be presented which have not been provided to the other party before the hearing if requested by the other party. "Documents" includes records and regulations.

The family must request an audio recording of the hearing, if desired, three days prior to the hearing date.

The Hearing Officer may ask the family for additional information and/or might adjourn the hearing in order to reconvene at a later date, before reaching a decision.

If the family misses an appointment or deadline ordered by the Hearing Officer, the action of the PHA shall take effect and another hearing will not be granted.

The Hearing Officer will determine whether the action, inaction or decision of the PHA is legal in accordance with HUD regulations and this Administrative Plan based upon the evidence and testimony provided at the hearing. Factual determinations relating to the individual circumstances of the family will be based on a preponderance of the evidence presented at the hearing.

A notice of the hearing findings shall be provided in writing to the PHA and the family promptly, generally within ten working days, and shall include:

A clear summary of the decision and reasons for the decision;

If the decision involves money owed, the amount owed and an explanation of the calculation of the amount;

The date the decision goes into effect.

The PHA is not bound by hearing decisions:

Which concern matters in which the PHA is not required to provide an opportunity for a hearing

Which conflict with or contradict to HUD regulations or requirements;

Which conflict with or contradict Federal, State or local laws; or

Which exceed the authority of the person conducting the hearing.

The PHA shall send a letter to the participant if it determines the PHA is not bound by the Hearing Officer's determination within ten (10) working days. The letter shall include the PHA's reasons for the decision.

All requests for a hearing, supporting documentation, and a copy of the final decision will be retained in the family's file.

**E. HEARING AND APPEAL PROVISIONS FOR "RESTRICTIONS ON ASSISTANCE TO NON-CITIZENS"** [24 CFR Part 5, Subpart E]

Assistance to the family may not be delayed, denied or terminated on the basis of immigration status at any time prior to the receipt of the decision on the INS appeal.

Assistance to a family may not be terminated or denied while the PHA hearing is pending but assistance to an applicant may be delayed pending the PHA hearing.

**INS Determination of Ineligibility**

If a family member claims to be an eligible immigrant and the INS SAVE system and manual search do not verify the claim, the PHA notifies the applicant or participant within ten days of their right to appeal to the INS within thirty days or to request an informal hearing with the PHA either in lieu of or subsequent to the INS appeal.

If the family appeals to the INS, they must give the PHA a copy of the appeal and proof of mailing or the PHA may proceed to deny or terminate. The time period to request an appeal may be extended by the PHA for good cause.

The request for a PHA hearing must be made within fourteen days of receipt of the notice offering the hearing or, if an appeal was made to the INS, within fourteen days of receipt of that notice.

After receipt of a request for an informal hearing, the hearing is conducted as described in this chapter for both applicants and participants. If the hearing officer decides that

the individual is not eligible, and there are no other eligible family members the PHA will:

Deny the applicant family

Defer termination if the family is a participant and qualifies for deferral

Terminate the participant if the family does not qualify for deferral

If there are eligible members in the family, the PHA will offer to prorate assistance or give the family the option to remove the ineligible members. All other complaints related to eligible citizen/immigrant status:

If any family member fails to provide documentation or certification as required by the regulation, that member is treated as ineligible. If all family members fail to provide, the family will be denied or terminated for failure to provide.

Participants whose termination is carried out after temporary deferral may not request a hearing since they had an opportunity for a hearing prior to the termination.

Participants whose assistance is pro-rated (either based on their statement that some members are ineligible or due to failure to verify eligible immigration status for some members after exercising their appeal and hearing rights described above) are entitled to a hearing based on the right to a hearing regarding determinations of tenant rent and Total Tenant Payment.

Families denied or terminated for fraud in connection with the non-citizens rule are entitled to a review or hearing in the same way as terminations for any other type of fraud.

**F. MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES FOR APPLICANTS/PARTICIPANTS WITH DISABILITIES** [24 CFR 982.204, 982.552(c)]

When applicants are denied placement on the waiting list, or the PHA is terminating assistance, the family will be informed that presence of a disability may be considered as a mitigating circumstance during the informal review process.

## Chapter 20

### SPECIAL HOUSING TYPES

[24 CFR 982.601]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The PHA will permit the use of the Special Housing Types (Single Room Occupancy Housing; Congregate Housing; Group Home Housing; Shared Housing; Cooperative Housing; and Homeownership) in its program **only if the applicant/participant can demonstrate that it is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability**. Acceptable demonstration will include documentation from one or more knowledgeable professionals who are familiar with the applicant/participant and or the type of special housing requested as accommodation.

The PHA will not set aside any program funding for special housing types, or for a special housing type.

#### **Verification of Need for Reasonable Accommodation**

Acceptable documentation as verification of the need for reasonable accommodation would be a letter to the PHA describing how the special housing type requested provides the accommodation of which the person is in need. The request and documentation will be reviewed by the Executive Director or Section 8 and Occupancy Manager and a written response stating approval or disapproval will be sent to the applicant/participant promptly, generally, within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the request.

A copy of the PHA's response with supporting documentation will be maintained in the applicant/participant's file. The requested housing type must be approvable by all other HUD standards and HQS requirements in accordance with 24 CFR 982 Section M - Special Housing Types.

#### **A. SINGLE ROOM OCCUPANCY** [24 CFR 982.602]

A single person may reside in an SRO housing unit.

The PHA will use a separate lease and housing assistance payment contract for each assisted person residing in a SRO. [24 CFR 982.603]

## **SRO Rent and Housing Assistance Payment** [24 CFR 982.604]

### Voucher Program

The PHA SRO payment standard is 75 percent of the zero bedroom payment standard schedule. For a person residing in an exception area the payment standard is 75 percent of the HUD-approved zero bedroom exception payment standard amount. While an assisted person resides in SRO housing, the SRO payment standard must be used to calculate the housing assistance payment.

### Utility Allowance

The utility allowance for an assisted person residing in SRO housing is 75 percent of the zero bedroom utility allowance.

## **Housing Quality Standards**

The PHA will ensure that all SRO units approved for the program are in compliance with all of the Housing Quality Standards for SROs as regulated in 24 CFR 982.605.

## **B. CONGREGATE HOUSING** [24 CFR 982.606]

An elderly person or a person with disabilities may reside in a congregate housing unit.

The PHA may approve a family member or live-in aide to reside with the elderly person or person with disabilities.

The PHA will approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

## **Congregate Housing Lease and HAP Contract** [24 CFR 982.607]

For congregate housing there will be a separate lease and HAP contract for each assisted family.

Unless there is a live-in aide, the payment standard for a family that resides in a congregate housing unit is the zero-bedroom payment standard on the PHA payment standard schedule.

However, if there are two or more rooms in the unit (not including kitchen or sanitary facilities), the payment standard for a family that resides in a congregate housing unit is the one bedroom payment standard amount.

If there is a live-in aide, the live-in aide will be counted in determining the family unit size.

## **Housing Quality Standards**

The PHA will ensure that all congregate housing units approved for the program are in compliance with all of the Housing Quality Standards for congregate housing as regulated in 24 CFR 982.609.

### **C. GROUP HOMES** [24 CFR 982.610, 982.612]

A group home must be licensed, certified, or otherwise approved in writing by the State, or the State's licensing department.

An elderly person or a person with disabilities may reside in a State-approved group home. If approved by the PHA, a live-in aide may reside with a person with disabilities.

The PHA must approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. Except for a live-in aide, all residents of a group home must be elderly persons or persons with disabilities.

The PHA will not approve assistance for a person to live in a group home if file documentation indicates that the person is in need of continual medical or nursing care.

No more than twelve persons may reside in a group home. This limit covers all persons who reside in the unit, including assisted and unassisted residents and any live-in aide.

### **Group Home Lease and HAP Contract** [24 CFR 982.611]

There will be a separate HAP contract and lease for each assisted person living in a group home. For a group home the term "pro-rata portion" means that which is derived by dividing the number of persons in the assisted household by the total number of residents (assisted and unassisted) residing in the group home. The number of persons in the assisted household equals one assisted person plus any PHA-approved live-in Aide.

### **Group Home Rent and HAP Contract** [24 CFR 982.613]

The rent to owner for an assisted person may not exceed the pro-rata portion of the reasonable rent for the group home.

The reasonable rent for a group home is determined in accordance with 982.503. In determining reasonable rent the PHA will consider whether sanitary facilities, and facilities for food preparation and service, are common facilities or private.

## **Maximum Subsidy**

Unless there is a live-in aide, the family unit size is one bedroom. If there is a live-in aide, the live-in aide will be counted in determining the family unit size.

The payment standard for a person who resides in a group home is the lower of the payment standard for the family unit size; or the pro-rata portion of the payment standard amount on the PHA payment standard schedule for the group home size.

### **Utility Allowance**

The utility allowance for each assisted person residing in a group home is the pro-rata portion of the utility allowance for the group home unit size.

### **Housing Quality Standards**

The PHA will ensure that all group home units approved for the program are in compliance with all of the Housing Quality Standards for group homes as regulated in 24 CFR 982.614.

## **D. SHARED HOUSING** [24 CFR 982.615]

### **Occupancy**

An assisted family may reside in shared housing. In shared housing, an assisted family may share a unit with another resident or residents of a unit. The unit may be a house or an apartment.

The PHA may approve a live-in aide to reside with a family in order to care for a person with a disability. The PHA must approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

Other persons who are assisted or not assisted under the tenant-based program may reside in a shared housing unit. The owner of a shared housing unit may reside in the unit.

A resident owner may enter into a HAP contract with the PHA. However, housing assistance may not be paid on behalf of an owner. The PHA will not approve assistance for a person or family that is related by blood or marriage to a resident owner.

There will be a separate housing assistance payment contract and lease for each assisted family residing in a shared housing unit.

### **Rent and HAP Contract**

For shared housing, the term "pro-rata portion" means the ratio derived by dividing the number of bedrooms in the private space available for occupancy by a family by the total number of bedrooms in the unit. For example, for a family entitled to occupy three bedrooms in a five bedroom unit, the ratio would be 3/5.

The rent to owner for the family may not exceed the pro-rata portion of the reasonable rent for the shared housing dwelling unit. The reasonable rent must be in accordance with the guidelines set in the "Owner Rents, Rent Reasonableness, and Payment Standards" chapter.

### **Maximum Subsidy**

For a family that resides in a shared housing unit the payment standard is the lower of the payment standard amount on the PHA payment standard schedule for the family unit size or the pro-rata portion of the payment standard amount on the PHA payment standard for the shared housing unit size.

If the PHA approves a live-in aide, the live-in aide will be counted in determining the family unit size.

### **Utility Allowance**

The utility allowance for an assisted family living in shared housing is the pro-rata portion of the utility allowance for the shared housing unit.

### **Housing Quality Standards**

The PHA will ensure that all shared housing units approved for the program are in compliance with all of the Housing Quality Standards for shared housing as regulated in 24 CFR 982.618.

## **E. COOPERATIVE HOUSING** [24 CFR 982.619]

The PHA will approve a family living in cooperative housing if it is determined that assistance under the program will help maintain affordability of the cooperative unit for low-income families. The PHA will not approve assistance for a family in cooperative housing until the PHA has also determined that the cooperative has adopted requirements to maintain continued affordability for low-income families after transfer of a cooperative member's interest in a cooperative unit (such as a sale of the resident's share in a cooperative corporation).

The reasonable rent in cooperative housing is determined in accordance with "Owner Rents, Rent Reasonableness, and Payment Standards" chapter. For cooperative housing, the rent to owner is the monthly carrying charge under the occupancy agreement/lease between the member and the cooperative.

The carrying charge consists of the amount assessed to the member by the cooperative for occupancy of the housing. It includes the member's share of the cooperative's debt service,

operating expenses, and necessary payments to cooperative reserve funds. However, the carrying charge does not include down-payments or other payments to purchase the cooperative unit, or to amortize a loan to the family for this purpose. Gross rent is the carrying charge plus any utility.

For a cooperative, rent adjustments are applied to the carrying charge as determined in "Owner Rents, Rent Reasonableness, and Payment Standards" chapter.

The lease and other appropriate documents will stipulate that the monthly carrying charge is subject to Section 8 limitations on rent to owner. The housing assistance payment will be determined in accordance with the guidelines in "Owner Rents, Rent Reasonableness, and Payment Standards" chapter.

The PHA may approve a live-in aide to reside with the family to care for a person with disabilities. The PHA will approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. If the PHA approves a live-in aide, the live-in aide will be counted when determining the family unit size.

### **Housing Quality Standards**

The PHA will ensure that all cooperative housing units approved for the program are in compliance with all of the Housing Quality Standards outlined in the "Housing Quality Standards and Inspections" chapter, and regulated by 24 CFR 982.401.

### **F. MANUFACTURED HOMES** [24 CFR 982.620]

The PHA will permit a family to lease a manufactured home and space with assistance under the program. The PHA will not provide assistance for a family that owns the manufactured home and leases only the space, unless it is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability.

The PHA may approve a live-in aide to reside with a family to care for a person with disabilities. The PHA will approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. If the PHA approves a live-in aide, the live-in aide must be counted when determining the family unit size.

### **Housing Quality Standards** [24 CFR 982.621]

A manufactured home must meet all the HQS requirements outlined in the "Housing Quality Standards and Inspections" chapter and regulated by 24 CFR 982.401. In addition the manufactured home also must meet the following requirements:

A manufactured home must be placed on the site in a stable manner, and must be free from hazards such as sliding or wind damage.

A manufactured home must be securely anchored by a tie-down device that distributes and transfers the loads imposed by the unit to appropriate ground anchors to resist wind overturning and sliding.

### **Manufactured Home Space Rental** [24 CFR 982.622]

Rent to owner for a manufactured home space will include payment for maintenance services that the owner must provide to the tenant under the lease for the space.

Rent to owner does not include the cost of utilities and trash collection for the manufactured home. However, the owner may charge the family a separate fee for the cost of utilities or trash collection provided by the owner.

### **Reasonable Rent**

During the assisted tenancy, the rent to owner for the manufactured home space may not exceed a reasonable rent as determined by the PHA.

The PHA will not approve a lease for a manufactured home space until the PHA has determined that the initial rent to owner for the space is a reasonable rent. At least annually during the assisted tenancy, the PHA will redetermine that the rent is reasonable.

The PHA will determine whether the rent to owner for a manufactured home space is a reasonable rent in comparison to rents for other comparable manufactured home spaces. The PHA will consider the size and location of the space and any services and maintenance provided by the owner in accordance with the lease.

By accepting each monthly housing assistance payment from the PHA, the owner of the manufactured home space certifies that the rent to owner for the space is not more than rent charged by the owner for unassisted rental of comparable spaces in the same manufactured home park or elsewhere. If requested by the PHA, the owner must provide the PHA information on rents for other manufactured home space.

### **Housing Assistance Payments for Manufactured Home Space** [24 CFR 982.623]

#### **HAP for the Voucher Tenancy**

There is a separate FMR for a family renting a manufactured home space. The payment standard is used to calculate the monthly housing assistance payment for a family. The FMR for rental of a manufactured home space is generally 40 percent of the published FMR for a two-bedroom unit.

## **Subsidy Calculation for the Voucher Program**

During the term of a voucher tenancy, the amount of the monthly housing assistance payment for a family will equal the lesser of:

The payment standard minus the total tenant payment; or

The rent paid for rental of the real property on which the manufactured home owned by the family is located (the space rent) minus the total tenant payment.

The space rent is the sum of the following as determined by the PHA:

Rent to owner for the manufactured home space;

Owner maintenance and management charges for the space;

The utility allowance for tenant paid utilities.

### **Utility Allowance Schedule for Manufactured Home Space Rental** [24 CFR 982.624]

The PHA will establish utility allowances for manufactured home space rental. For the first twelve months of the initial lease term only, the allowances will include a reasonable amount for utility hook-up charges payable by the family, if the family actually incurs the expenses because of a move.

Allowances for utility hook-up charges do not apply to a family that leases a manufactured home space in place.

Utility allowances for manufactured home space will not be applied to cover the costs of digging a well or installation of a septic system.

### **G. HOMEOWNERSHIP** [24 CFR 982.625]

#### **24 CFR 982.625 (d)(2)**

It is the sole responsibility of the PHA to determine whether it is reasonable to implement a homeownership program as a reasonable accommodation. The PHA will determine what is reasonable based on the specific circumstances and individual needs of the person with a disability. The PHA may determine that it is not reasonable to offer homeownership assistance as a reasonable accommodation in cases where the PHA has otherwise opted not to implement a homeownership program.