

**ADMISSIONS AND CONTINUED OCCUPANCY POLICY**  
**FOR THE**  
**PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM**

May 1, 2005

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According to the HUD Field Office the ACOP no longer needs to be submitted to HUD

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## Introduction

### ABOUT THE MODEL ACOP

#### HOW TO USE THE MODEL ACOP

The model ACOP includes recommended language for each area in which the PHA has discretion or flexibility to adopt its own policies. To make the editing process easier, the model ACOP contains only **one version** of each policy – generally HUD’s safe harbor policy or the policy that seems to be common to most PHAs. *This means that if the model policy language works for your PHA, no cutting and pasting is required.*

HUD regulations and other requirements are described in detail in the model ACOP with appropriate citations. They are also summarized in the policy guide as needed to assist in making decisions.

#### The Policy Guide and Instructions

The policy guide is a decision-making tool for PHA policy makers. You can use the guide as a checklist for evaluating your compliance with HUD requirements and for making decisions about local policies. PHA decision points are identified throughout this document with this symbol:



The policy guide provides recommended language and policy options and explains why the recommended language is used in the model ACOP.

- If you decide to adopt an alternative policy, you may edit or delete the NMA-provided language in the model ACOP, cut and paste another option from the policy guide, or develop and type in your own wording.

Before starting work on the revision, print out the Acrobat PDF files of the model ACOP pages and policy guide for each chapter. Read through the model policy and review the decision points in the policy guide to determine if you want to make any changes to the model ACOP. After you have edited the model ACOP, print out the revised chapter to update your hard copy and, and edit the table of contents (TOC) file if necessary to update the TOC for your ACOP.

#### Working with the Computer Files

On your hard drive or network drive, set up a *subdirectory* (such as ACOPrev) for the ACOP revision in your ACOP or other directory in which you keep your documents. Copy the files for the policy document and the guide chapters from the CD-ROM into that directory and use them as your working files. Store your CD-ROM in a safe place.

## **ABOUT THE MODEL ACOP AND THE PUBLIC HOUSING LEASE**

PHA policy must be consistent with the public housing lease and any policy documents provided to tenants, and the lease and policy documents must comply with federal and state law.

The model ACOP contains policies that reflect the terms of your public housing lease. Policies on a particular topic may be included in the public housing lease, or may be a separate document incorporated in the lease by reference, such as a pet policy or transfer policy.

Because of variations in state and local landlord-tenant law, and because HUD affords PHAs wide discretion in some areas, a broad range of policies could be acceptable. Only a few of these compliant policies can be listed in the model ACOP.

If you are assured that your current board-approved public housing lease or separate policy document is up-to-date and is compliant with HUD requirements and with federal, state, and local laws, then it is neither necessary nor advisable to revise the terms of your lease or policy document to match default policies in the model ACOP. Instead, you should edit the model ACOP to match the terms of your existing public housing lease.

## **REFERENCES CITED IN THE MODEL ACOP**

Authority for PHA policies is derived from many sources. Primary among these sources are regulations and guidance issued by HUD. State law also directs PHA policy. State law must be followed where such law exists and does not conflict with federal regulations. In the absence of legal requirements or HUD guidance, industry practice may lead to PHA policy. Finally, the public housing lease will affect PHA policy and therefore must be consistent with federal and state laws and regulations.

## **HUD**

HUD provides the primary source of PHA policy through federal regulations, HUD Notices and handbooks. Compliance with federal regulations, current HUD Notices and HUD handbooks is mandatory.

HUD provides nonmandatory guidance to PHAs through HUD published guidebooks. Expired HUD Notices and handbooks also provide guidance for PHA policy. Following HUD guidance is optional, as long as PHA policies comply with federal law, federal regulations and mandatory policy. Because HUD has already determined that the guidance it provides is consistent with mandatory policies, PHA reliance on HUD guidance provides the PHA with a “safe harbor.”

Content contained on the HUD website can provide further clarification of HUD policies. For example, FAQs on the HUD website can provide direction on the application of federal regulations to a specific pattern.

## **State Law**

Where there is no mandatory federal guidance, PHAs must comply with state law, if it exists. Where state law is more restrictive than federal law, but does not conflict with it, the PHA should follow the state law.

## **Industry Practice**

Where no law or HUD authority exists on a particular subject, industry practice may support PHA policy. An industry practice is a way of doing things that is followed by most housing authorities.

## **RESOURCES CITED IN THE MODEL ACOP**

The model ACOP cites several documents. Where a document or resource is cited frequently, it may be abbreviated. Where it is cited only once or twice, the model ACOP may contain the entire name of the document or resource. Following is a key to abbreviations used for various sources that are frequently cited in the ACOP, and a list of references and document locations that are referenced in the model ACOP or that may be helpful to you.

### **Abbreviations**

Throughout the model ACOP, abbreviations are used to designate certain documents in citations. The following is a table of abbreviations of documents cited by the model ACOP.

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Document</b>
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
HCV GB	Housing Choice Voucher Program Guidebook (7420.10G), April 2001.
HUD-50058 IB	HUD-50058 Instruction Booklet
PH OCC GB	Public Housing Occupancy Guidebook, June 2003
RHIIP FAQs	Rental Housing Integrity Improvement Program (RHIIP) Frequently Asked Questions
VG	Verification Guidance, March 2004 (attachment to PIH Notice 2004-1)

## Resources and Where to Find Them

Following is a list of resources helpful to the PHA or referenced in the model ACOP, and the online location of each.

Document and Location
Code of Federal Regulations <a href="http://www.ecfr.gov">http://www.ecfr.gov</a>
Earned Income Disregard FAQs <a href="https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/phr/about/ao_faq_eid">https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/phr/about/ao_faq_eid</a>
Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System PHA Security Procedures, Version 1.2, issued January 2005 <a href="https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/EIVSECGUIDEPHA.PDF">https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/EIVSECGUIDEPHA.PDF</a>
Executive Order 11063 <a href="https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/11063.html">https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/11063.html</a>
Federal Register <a href="https://www.federalregister.gov/">https://www.federalregister.gov/</a>
HUD-50058 Instruction Booklet <a href="https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/FORM50058INSTRUCTBOOKLET.PDF">https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/FORM50058INSTRUCTBOOKLET.PDF</a>
Joint Statement of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Justice, issued May 17, 2004 <a href="https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2010/12/14/joint_statement_ra.pdf">https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2010/12/14/joint_statement_ra.pdf</a>
Final Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons, published January 22, 2007 <a href="https://www.lep.gov/guidance/HUD_guidance_Jan07.pdf">https://www.lep.gov/guidance/HUD_guidance_Jan07.pdf</a>
Notice PIH 2010-26, Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Notice <a href="http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/publications/notices/10/pih2010-26.pdf">http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/publications/notices/10/pih2010-26.pdf</a>

<p>Notice PIH 2017-12, Administrative Guidance for Effective and Mandated Use of the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System</p> <p><a href="https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/PIH2017-12EIVNOTICE.PDF">https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/PIH2017-12EIVNOTICE.PDF</a></p>
<p>Notice PIH 2018-24, Verification of Social Security Numbers (SSNs) Social Security (SS) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Benefits; and Effective Use of the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System's Identity Verification Report</p> <p><a href="https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/PIH-2018-24_EIV_SSN_Notice_FINAL.pdf">https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/PIH-2018-24_EIV_SSN_Notice_FINAL.pdf</a></p>
<p>OMB Circular A-133</p> <p><a href="https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/circulars/A133/a133.pdf">https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/circulars/A133/a133.pdf</a></p>
<p>Public Housing Occupancy Guidebook, June 2003</p> <p><a href="https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/DOC_10760.PDF">https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/DOC_10760.PDF</a></p>
<p>VAWA Reauthorization Act of 2013</p> <p><a href="http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-08-06/pdf/2013-18920.pdf">http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-08-06/pdf/2013-18920.pdf</a></p>

The HUD website is <https://www.hud.gov/>.

Guidebooks, handbooks, and other HUD resources may be found at the HUDClips website: [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/administration/hudclips](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/administration/hudclips).



## **Chapter 1**

### **OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM AND PLAN**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The PHA receives its operating subsidy for the public housing program from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The PHA is not a federal department or agency. A public housing agency (PHA) is a governmental or public body, created and authorized by state law to develop and operate housing and housing programs for low-income families. The PHA enters into an Annual Contributions Contract with HUD to administer the public housing program. The PHA must ensure compliance with federal laws, regulations and notices and must establish policies and procedures to clarify federal requirements and to ensure consistency in program operation.

This chapter contains information about the PHA and its programs with emphasis on the public housing program. It also contains information about the purpose, intent and use of the plan and guide.

There are three parts to this chapter:

Part I: The Public Housing Agency (PHA). This part includes a description of the PHA, its jurisdiction, its programs, and its mission and intent.

Part II: The Public Housing Program. This part contains information about public housing operation, roles and responsibilities, and partnerships.

Part III: The Admissions and Continued Occupancy (ACOP). This part discusses the purpose and organization of the plan and its revision requirements.

#### **PART I: THE PHA**

##### **1-I.A. OVERVIEW**

This part describes the PHA's creation and authorization, the general structure of the organization, and the relationship between the PHA Board and staff.



## **1-I.B. ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE PHA**

Public housing is funded by the federal government and administered by the Washington County Community Development Agency (WCCDA) for the jurisdiction of the county of Washington, Minnesota.

PHAs are governed by a board of officials that are generally called “commissioners.” Although some PHAs may use a different title for their officials, this document will hitherto refer to the “board of commissioners” or the “board” when discussing the board of governing officials.

Commissioners are appointed in accordance with state housing law and generally serve in the same capacity as the directors of a corporation. The board of commissioners establishes policies under which the PHA conducts business, and ensures that those policies are followed by PHA staff. The board is responsible for preserving and expanding the agency’s resources and assuring the agency’s continued viability and success.

Formal actions of the PHA are taken through written resolutions, adopted by the board and entered into the official records of the PHA.

The principal staff member of the PHA is the executive director (ED), who is selected and hired by the board. The ED oversees the day to day operations of the PHA and is directly responsible for carrying out the policies established by the commissioners. The ED’s duties include hiring, training, and supervising the PHA’s staff, as well as budgeting and financial planning for the agency. Additionally, the ED is charged with ensuring compliance with federal and state laws, and program mandates. In some PHAs, the ED is known by another title, such as chief executive officer or president.

### **1-I.C. PHA MISSION**

The purpose of a mission statement is to communicate the purpose of the agency to people inside and outside of the agency. It provides the basis for strategy development, identification of critical success factors, resource allocation decisions, as well as ensuring client and stakeholder satisfaction.

#### **PHA Policy**

The WCCDA mission statement is:

Through innovation, the Washington County Community Development Agency promotes community and economic development, and provides and maintains affordable, decent and safe housing opportunities in Washington County.

### **1-I.D. THE PHA'S COMMITMENT TO ETHICS AND SERVICE**

As a public service agency, the PHA is committed to providing excellent service to all public housing applicants, residents, and the public. In order to provide superior service, the PHA resolves to:

- Administer applicable federal and state laws and regulations to achieve high ratings in compliance measurement indicators while maintaining efficiency in program operation to ensure fair and consistent treatment of clients served.
- Provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing in good repair – in compliance with program uniform physical condition standards – for very low- and low-income families.
- Achieve a healthy mix of incomes in its public housing developments by attracting and retaining higher income families and by working toward deconcentration of poverty goals.
- Encourage self-sufficiency of participant families and assist in the expansion of family opportunities which address educational, socio-economic, recreational and other human services needs.
- Promote fair housing and the opportunity for very low- and low-income families of all races, ethnicities, national origins, religions, ethnic backgrounds, and with all types of disabilities, to participate in the public housing program and its services.
- Create positive public awareness and expand the level of family and community support in accomplishing the PHA's mission.
- Attain and maintain a high level of standards and professionalism in day-to-day management of all program components.
- Administer an efficient, high-performing agency through continuous improvement of the PHA's support systems and commitment to our employees and their development.

The PHA will make every effort to keep residents informed of program rules and regulations, and to advise participants of how the program rules affect them.

## **PART II: THE PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM**

### **1-II.A. OVERVIEW AND HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM**

The intent of this section is to provide the public and staff an overview of the history and operation of public housing.

The United States Housing Act of 1937 (the “Act”) is responsible for the birth of federal housing program initiatives, known as public housing. The Act was intended to provide financial assistance to states and cities for public works projects, slum clearance and the development of affordable housing for low-income residents. There have been many changes to the program since its inception in 1937.

The Housing Act of 1965 established the availability of federal assistance, administered through local public agencies, to provide rehabilitation grants for home repairs and rehabilitation. This act also created the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The Housing Act of 1969 created an operating subsidy for the public housing program for the first time. Until that time, public housing was a self-sustaining program.

In 1998, the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act (QHWRA) – also known as the Public Housing Reform Act or Housing Act of 1998 – was signed into law. Its purpose was to provide more private sector management guidelines to the public housing program and provide residents with greater choices. It also allowed PHAs more remedies to replace or revitalize severely distressed public housing developments. Highlights of the Reform Act include: the establishment of flat rents; the requirement for PHAs to develop five-year and annual plans; income targeting, a requirement that 40% of all new admissions in public housing during any given fiscal year be reserved for extremely low-income families; and resident self-sufficiency incentives.

## **1-II.B. PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM BASICS**

HUD writes and publishes regulations in order to implement public housing laws enacted by Congress. HUD contracts with the PHA to administer programs in accordance with HUD regulations and provides an operating subsidy to the PHA. The PHA must create written policies that are consistent with HUD regulations. Among these policies is the PHA's Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP). The ACOP must be approved by the board of commissioners of the PHA.

The job of the PHA pursuant to HUD regulations is to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing, in good repair, to low-income families at an affordable rent. The PHA screens applicants for public housing and, if they are determined to be eligible for the program, the PHA makes an offer of a housing unit. If the applicant accepts the offer, the PHA and the applicant will enter into a written lease agreement. At this point, the applicant becomes a tenant in the public housing program.

In the context of the public housing program, a tenant is defined as the adult person(s) (other than a live-in aide who (1) executed the lease with the PHA as lessee of the dwelling unit, or, if no such person now resides in the unit, (2) who resides in the unit, and who is the remaining head of household of the tenant family residing in the dwelling unit. [24 CFR 966.53]. The Public Housing Occupancy Guidebook refers to tenants as "residents." The terms "tenant" and "resident" are used interchangeably in this policy. Additionally, this policy uses the term "family" or "families" for residents or applicants, depending on context.

Since the PHA owns the public housing development, the PHA is the landlord. The PHA must comply with all of the legal and management responsibilities of a landlord in addition to administering the program in accordance with HUD regulations and PHA policy.

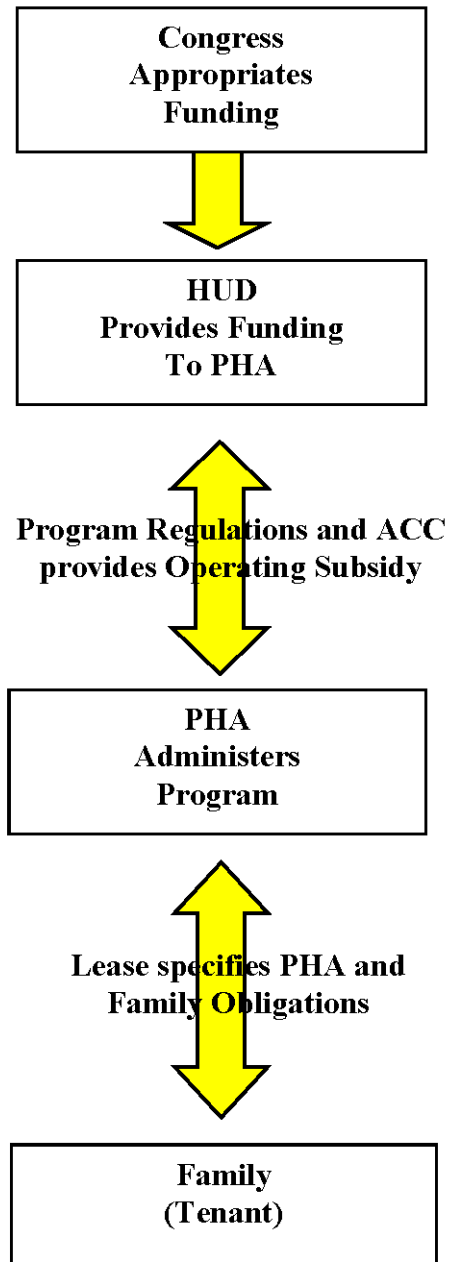
## **1-II.C. PUBLIC HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS**

To administer the public housing program, the PHA must enter into an Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) with HUD. The PHA also enters into a contractual relationship with the tenant through the public housing lease. These contracts define and describe the roles and responsibilities of each party.

In addition to the ACC, the PHA and family must also comply with federal regulations and other HUD publications and directives. For the program to work and be successful, all parties involved – HUD, the PHA, and the tenant – play an important role.

The chart on the following page illustrates key aspects of these relationships.

## **The Public Housing Relationships**



## **What does HUD do?**

Federal law is the source of HUD responsibilities. HUD has the following major responsibilities:

- Develop regulations, requirements, handbooks, notices and other guidance to implement housing legislation passed by Congress
- Allocate operating subsidies to PHAs
- Allocate capital funding to PHAs
- Provide technical assistance to PHAs on interpreting and applying program requirements
- Monitor PHA compliance with program requirements and PHA performance in program administration.

## **What does the PHA do?**

The PHA's responsibilities originate in federal regulations and the ACC. The PHA owns and manages public housing developments, administers the program under contract with HUD and has the following major responsibilities:

- Ensure compliance with all non-discrimination, equal opportunity, and fair housing laws, and ensure that the program is accessible to persons with disabilities
- Establish local policies and procedures for operating the program
- Accept applications from interested applicant families and determine whether they are income eligible for the program
- Maintain waiting list and select families for admission
- Screen applicant families for suitability as renters
- Maintain housing units by making any necessary repairs in a timely manner
- Make unit offers to families (minimize vacancies without overcrowding)
- Maintain properties to the standard of decent, safe, sanitary, and in good repair (including assuring compliance with uniform physical conditions standards)
- Make sure the PHA has adequate financial resources to maintain its housing stock
- Perform regular reexaminations of family income and composition in accordance with HUD requirements
- Collect rent due from the assisted family and comply with and enforce provisions of the lease
- Ensure that families comply with program rules
- Provide families with prompt and professional service
- Comply with HUD regulations and requirements, the Annual Contributions Contract, HUD-approved applications for funding, the PHA's ACOP, and other applicable federal, state and local laws.

**What does the tenant do?**

The tenant's responsibilities are articulated in the public housing lease. The tenant has the following broad responsibilities:

- Comply with the terms of the lease and PHA house rules, as applicable
- Provide the PHA with complete and accurate information, determined by the PHA to be necessary for administration of the program
- Cooperate in attending all appointments scheduled by the PHA
- Allow the PHA to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice
- Take responsibility for care of the housing unit, including any violations of uniform physical condition standards caused by the family
- Not engage in drug-related or violent criminal activity
- Notify the PHA before moving or termination of the lease
- Use the assisted unit only for residence and as the sole residence of the family. Not sublet the unit or assign the lease
- Promptly notify the PHA of any changes in family composition
- Not commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any housing programs
- Take care of the housing unit and report maintenance problems to the PHA promptly

If all parties fulfill their obligations in a professional and timely manner, the program responsibilities will be fulfilled in an effective manner.



## **1-II.D. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS**

Applicable regulations include:

- 24 CFR Part 5: General Program Requirements
- 24 CFR Part 8: Nondiscrimination
- 24 CFR Part 35: Lead-Based Paint
- 24 CFR Part 902: Public Housing Assessment System
- 24 CFR Part 903: Public Housing Agency Plans
- 24 CFR Part 945: Designated Housing
- 24 CFR Part 960: Admission and Occupancy Policies
- 24 CFR Part 965: PHA-Owned or Leased Projects – General Provisions
- 24 CFR Part 966: Lease and Grievance Procedures

## **PART III: THE ADMISSIONS AND CONTINUED OCCUPANCY POLICIES**

### **1-III.A. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

The ACOP is the PHA's written statement of policies used to carry out the housing program in accordance with federal law and regulations, and HUD requirements. The ACOP is required by HUD and it must be available for public review [CFR 24 Part 903]. The ACOP also contains policies that support the objectives contained in the PHA's Agency Plan.

All issues related to public housing not addressed in this ACOP are governed by federal regulations, HUD handbooks and guidebooks, notices and applicable state and local laws. The policies in this ACOP have been designed to ensure compliance with the consolidated ACC and all HUD-approved applications for program funding. The PHA is responsible for complying with all changes in HUD regulations pertaining to public housing. If such changes conflict with this plan, HUD regulations will have precedence.

### **1-III.B. CONTENTS OF THE POLICY**

Unlike the housing choice voucher program, HUD regulations for public housing do not contain a list of what must be included in the ACOP. However, individual regulations contain requirements of inclusion in the PHA's written policy. At a minimum, the ACOP plan should cover PHA policies on these subjects:

- The organization of the waiting list and how families are selected and offered available units, including any PHA admission preferences, procedures for removing applicant names from the waiting list, and procedures for closing and reopening the PHA waiting list (Chapters 4 and 5)
- Transfer policies and the circumstances under which a transfer would take precedence over an admission (Chapter 12)
- Standards for determining eligibility, suitability for tenancy, and the size and type of the unit needed (Chapters 3 and 5)
- Procedures for verifying the information the family has provided (Chapter 7)
- The method for achieving deconcentration of poverty and income-mixing of public housing developments (Chapter 4)
- Grievance procedures (Chapter 14)
- Policies concerning payment by a family to the PHA of amounts the family owes the PHA (Chapter 15 and 16)
- Interim redeterminations of family income and composition (Chapter 9)
- Policies regarding community service requirements; (Chapter 11)
- Policies and rules about safety and ownership of pets in public housing (Chapter 10).

## **New Approach to Policy Development**

HUD has developed an approach to monitoring PHAs that emphasizes the importance of consistency in operation and decision-making. The ACOP supports that goal by clearly setting forth the PHA's operating policies.

A primary focus of HUD's Rental Integrity Monitoring (RIM) program has been consistency in how PHAs conduct their business and in how HUD monitors PHA activities. Referring to and following the ACOP is essential to maintaining consistency in applying PHA policy.

HUD makes a distinction between mandatory policies and non-mandatory policies:

- Mandatory policies: those driven by legislation, regulations, current handbooks, current PIH notices, and legal opinions from the Office of General Counsel
- Optional, non-binding guidance: includes guidebooks, FAQs, PIH notices that have expired, and recommendations from individual HUD staff.

HUD expects PHAs to develop policies and procedures that are consistent with mandatory policies and to make clear the optional policies the PHA has adopted. The ACOP is comprised of mandatory policies and optional PHA policy. HUD's new direction emphasizes the need for a clearly written and comprehensive ACOP to guide staff in the clear and consistent application of policy.

HUD suggestions, recommendations, written issuances, and guidance are consistent with mandatory federal policy. Therefore, using HUD guidance in the preparation of PHA policy, even though it is not mandatory, provides a PHA with a "safe harbor." If a PHA adopts its own optional policy, it must make its own determination that such policy is consistent with legislation, regulations, and other mandatory requirements. There may be very good reasons for adopting a policy or procedure that is different than that suggested by HUD, but PHAs should carefully think through those decisions and be able to articulate how their policy is consistent with federal laws, regulations and mandatory policy.

## **1-III.C. UPDATING AND REVISING THE POLICY**

The PHA will revise this ACOP as needed to comply with changes in HUD regulations. The original policy and any changes must be approved by the board of commissioners of the PHA, the pertinent sections included in the Agency Plan, and a copy provided to HUD.

### PHA Policy

The PHA will review and update the ACOP as needed to reflect changes in regulations, PHA operations, or when needed to ensure staff consistency in operation.

## Chapter 2

### FAIR HOUSING AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the laws and HUD regulations requiring PHAs to affirmatively further civil rights and fair housing in all federally assisted housing programs. The letter and spirit of these laws are implemented through consistent policy and procedures. The responsibility to further nondiscrimination pertains to all areas of the PHA's public housing operations.

This chapter describes HUD regulations and PHA policies related to these topics in three parts:

Part I: Nondiscrimination. This part presents the body of laws and regulations governing the responsibilities of the PHA regarding nondiscrimination.

Part II: Policies Related to Persons with Disabilities. This part discusses the rules and policies of the public housing program related to reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities. These rules and policies are based on the Fair Housing Act (42.U.S.C.) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and incorporate guidance from the Joint Statement of The Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Justice (DOJ), issued May 17, 2004.

Part III: Prohibition of Discrimination Against Limited English Proficiency Persons. This part details the obligations of the PHA to ensure meaningful access to the public housing program and its activities by persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). This part incorporates the Final Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons published January 22, 2007, in the *Federal Register*.



## **PART I: NONDISCRIMINATION**

### **2-I.A. OVERVIEW**

Federal laws require PHAs to treat all applicants and tenant families equally, providing the same quality of service, regardless of family characteristics and background. Federal law prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, familial status, and disability. In addition, HUD regulations provide for additional protections regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, and marital status. The PHA will comply fully with all federal, state, and local nondiscrimination laws, and with rules and regulations governing fair housing and equal opportunity in housing and employment, including:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (as amended by the Community Development Act of 1974 and the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988)
- Executive Orders 11063 and 13988
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1975
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (to the extent that it applies, otherwise Section 504 and the Fair Housing Amendments govern)
- The Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA)
- The Equal Access to Housing in HUD Programs Regardless of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity Final Rule, published in the *Federal Register* February 3, 2012
- Any applicable state laws or local ordinances and any legislation protecting individual rights of tenants, applicants, or staff that may subsequently be enacted

When more than one civil rights law applies to a situation, the laws will be read and applied together.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will be in compliance with applicable state or local nondiscrimination laws or ordinances that apply.

## **2-I.B. NONDISCRIMINATION**

Federal regulations prohibit discrimination against certain protected classes and other groups of people. State and local requirements, as well as PHA policies, can prohibit discrimination against additional classes of people.

The PHA shall not discriminate because of race, color, sex, religion, familial status, age, disability or national origin (called “protected classes”).

Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women, and people securing custody of children under the age of 18.

The PHA will not discriminate on the basis of marital status, gender identity, or sexual orientation [FR Notice 02/03/12; Executive Order 13988].

### PHA Policy

The PHA follows applicable state and local laws as to nondiscrimination. The PHA does not identify any additional protected classes.

The PHA will not use any of these factors to:

- Deny to any family the opportunity to apply for housing, nor deny to any qualified applicant the opportunity to participate in the public housing program
- Provide housing that is different from that provided to others
- Subject anyone to segregation or disparate treatment
- Restrict anyone's access to any benefit enjoyed by others in connection with the housing program
- Treat a person differently in determining eligibility or other requirements for admission
- Steer an applicant or tenant toward or away from a particular area based on any of these factors
- Deny anyone access to the same level of services
- Deny anyone the opportunity to participate in a planning or advisory group that is an integral part of the housing program
- Discriminate in the provision of residential real estate transactions
- Discriminate against someone because they are related to or associated with a member of a protected class
- Publish or cause to be published an advertisement or notice indicating the availability of housing that prefers or excludes persons who are members of a protected class

## **Providing Information to Families**

The PHA must take steps to ensure that families are fully aware of all applicable civil rights laws. As part of the public housing orientation process, the PHA will provide information to public housing applicant families about civil rights requirements.

## **Discrimination Complaints**

If an applicant or tenant family believes that any family member has been discriminated against by the PHA, the family should advise the PHA. HUD requires the PHA to make every reasonable attempt to determine whether the applicant's or tenant family's assertions have merit and take any warranted corrective action.

In all cases, the PHA may advise the family to file a fair housing complaint if the family feels they have been discriminated against under the Fair Housing Act.

Upon receipt of a housing discrimination complaint, the PHA is required to:

- Provide written notice of the complaint to those alleged and inform the complainant that such notice was made
- Investigate the allegations and provide the complainant and those alleged with findings and either a proposed corrective action or an explanation of why corrective action is not warranted
- Keep records of all complaints, investigations, notices, and corrective actions [Notice PIH 2014-20]

### PHA Policy

Applicants or tenant families who believe that they have been subject to unlawful discrimination may notify the PHA either orally or in writing. The PHA will provide assistance if the applicant or the tenant families require assistance to make a written report. If the report is oral the PHA will make a written report and date it according to the date it was reported.

Within 10 business days of receiving the complaint, the PHA will provide a written notice to those alleged to have violated the rule. The PHA will also send a written notice to the complainant informing them that notice was sent to those alleged to have violated the rule, as well as information on how to complete and submit a housing discrimination complaint form to HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO)

The PHA will attempt to remedy discrimination complaints made against the PHA and will conduct an investigation into all allegations of discrimination.

Within 10 business days following the conclusion of the PHA's investigation, the PHA will provide the complainant and those alleged to have violated the rule with findings and either a proposed corrective action plan or an explanation of why corrective action is not warranted.

The PHA will keep a record of all complaints, investigations, notices and corrective actions. (See Chapter 16.)



## **PART II: POLICIES RELATED TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

### **2-II.A. OVERVIEW**

One type of disability discrimination prohibited by the Fair Housing Act is the refusal to make reasonable accommodation in rules, policies, practices, or services when such accommodation may be necessary to afford a person with a disability the equal opportunity to use and enjoy a program or dwelling under the program.

The PHA must ensure that persons with disabilities have full access to the PHA's programs and services. This responsibility begins with the first inquiry of an interested family and continues through every programmatic area of the public housing program [24 CFR 8].

The PHA must provide a notice to each tenant that the tenant may, at any time during the tenancy, request reasonable accommodation of a handicap of a household member, including reasonable accommodation so that the tenant can meet lease requirements or other requirements of tenancy [24 CFR 966.7(b)].

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will ask all applicants and resident families if they require any type of accommodations, in writing, on the intake application, reexamination documents, and notices of adverse action by the PHA, by including the following language:

“If you or anyone in your family is a person with disabilities, and you require a specific accommodation in order to fully utilize our programs and services, please contact the housing authority.”

A specific position and phone number will be provided as the contact person for requests for accommodation for persons with disabilities.

## **2-II.B. DEFINITION OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION**

A “reasonable accommodation” is a change, exception, or adjustment to a policy, practice or service that may be necessary for a person with a disability to have an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling, including public and common use spaces. Since policies and services may have a different effect on persons with disabilities than on other persons, treating persons with disabilities exactly the same as others will sometimes deny them an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling. [Joint Statement of the Departments of HUD and Justice: Reasonable Accommodations under the Fair Housing Act]

Federal regulations stipulate that requests for accommodations will be considered reasonable if they do not create an "undue financial and administrative burden" for the PHA, or result in a “fundamental alteration” in the nature of the program or service offered. A fundamental alteration is a modification that alters the essential nature of a provider’s operations.

### **Types of Reasonable Accommodations**

When it is reasonable (see definition above and Section 2-II.E), the PHA shall accommodate the needs of a person with disabilities. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Permitting applications and reexaminations to be completed by mail
- Providing “large-print” forms
- Conducting home visits
- Permitting a higher utility allowance for the unit if a person with disabilities requires the use of specialized equipment related to the disability
- Modifying or altering a unit or physical system if such a modification or alteration is necessary to provide equal access to a person with a disability
- Installing a ramp into a dwelling or building
- Installing grab bars in a bathroom
- Installing visual fire alarms for hearing impaired persons
- Allowing a PHA-approved live-in aide to reside in the unit if that person is determined to be essential to the care of a person with disabilities, is not obligated for the support of the person with disabilities, and would not be otherwise living in the unit.
- Providing a designated handicapped-accessible parking space
- Allowing an assistance animal
- Permitting an authorized designee or advocate to participate in the application or certification process and any other meetings with PHA staff
- Displaying posters and other housing information in locations throughout the PHA's office in such a manner as to be easily readable from a wheelchair

## **2-II.C. REQUEST FOR AN ACCOMMODATION**

If an applicant or participant indicates that an exception, change, or adjustment to a rule, policy, practice, or service is needed because of a disability, HUD requires that the PHA treat the information as a request for a reasonable accommodation, even if no formal request is made [Joint Statement of the Departments of HUD and Justice: Reasonable Accommodations under the Fair Housing Act].

The family must explain what type of accommodation is needed to provide the person with the disability full access to the PHA's programs and services.

If the need for the accommodation is not readily apparent or known to the PHA, the family must explain the relationship between the requested accommodation and the disability.

### PHA Policy

The PHA will encourage the family to make its request in writing, however, the PHA will consider the accommodation any time the family indicates that an accommodation is needed whether or not a formal written request is submitted.

## **2-II.D. VERIFICATION OF DISABILITY**

The regulatory civil rights definition for persons with disabilities is provided in Exhibit 2-1 at the end of this chapter. The definition of a person with a disability for the purpose of obtaining a reasonable accommodation is much broader than the HUD definition of disability which is used for waiting list preferences and income allowances.

Before providing an accommodation, the PHA must determine that the person meets the definition of a person with a disability, and that the accommodation will enhance the family's access to the PHA's programs and services.

If a person's disability is obvious or otherwise known to the PHA, and if the need for the requested accommodation is also readily apparent or known, no further verification will be required [Joint Statement of the Departments of HUD and Justice: Reasonable Accommodations under the Fair Housing Act].

If a family indicates that an accommodation is required for a disability that is not obvious or otherwise known to the PHA, the PHA must verify that the person meets the definition of a person with a disability, and that the limitations imposed by the disability require the requested accommodation.

When verifying a disability, the PHA will follow the verification policies provided in Chapter 7. All information related to a person's disability will be treated in accordance with the confidentiality policies provided in Chapter 16 (Program Administration). In addition to the general requirements that govern all verification efforts, the following requirements apply when verifying a disability:

- Third-party verification must be obtained from an individual identified by the family who is competent to make the determination. A doctor or other medical professional, a peer support group, a non-medical service agency, or a reliable third party who is in a position to know about the individual's disability may provide verification of a disability [Joint Statement of the Departments of HUD and Justice: Reasonable Accommodations under the Fair Housing Act].
- The PHA must request only information that is necessary to evaluate the disability-related need for the accommodation. The PHA may not inquire about the nature or extent of any disability.
- Medical records will not be accepted or retained in the participant file.
- In the event that the PHA does receive confidential information about a person's specific diagnosis, treatment, or the nature or severity of the disability, the PHA will dispose of it. In place of the information, the PHA will note in the file that the disability and other requested information have been verified, the date the verification was received, and the name and address of the knowledgeable professional who sent the information [Notice PIH 2010-26].

## **2-II.E. APPROVAL/DENIAL OF A REQUESTED ACCOMMODATION** [Joint Statement of the Departments of HUD and Justice: Reasonable Accommodations under the Fair Housing Act, Notice PIH 2010-26]

The PHA must approve a request for an accommodation if the following three conditions are met.

- The request was made by or on behalf of a person with a disability.
- There is a disability-related need for the accommodation.
- The requested accommodation is reasonable, meaning it would not impose an undue financial and administrative burden on the PHA, or fundamentally alter the nature of the PHA's operations.

Requests for accommodations must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The determination of undue financial and administrative burden must be made on a case-by-case basis involving various factors, such as the overall size of the PHA's program with respect to the number of employees, type of facilities and size of budget, type of operation including composition and structure of workforce, the nature and cost of the requested accommodation, and the availability of alternative accommodations that would effectively meet the family's disability-related needs.

Before making a determination whether to approve the request, the PHA may enter into discussion and negotiation with the family, request more information from the family, or may require the family to sign a consent form so that the PHA may verify the need for the requested accommodation.

### PHA Policy

After a request for an accommodation is presented, the PHA will respond, in writing, within 10 business days.

If the PHA denies a request for an accommodation because there is no relationship, or nexus, found between the disability and the requested accommodation, the notice will inform the family of the right to appeal the PHA's decision through an informal hearing (if applicable) or the grievance process (see Chapter 14).

If the PHA denies a request for an accommodation because it is not reasonable (it would impose an undue financial and administrative burden or fundamentally alter the nature of the PHA's operations), the PHA will discuss with the family whether an alternative accommodation could effectively address the family's disability-related needs without a fundamental alteration to the public housing program and without imposing an undue financial and administrative burden.

If the PHA believes that the family has failed to identify a reasonable alternative accommodation after interactive discussion and negotiation, the PHA will notify the family, in writing, of its determination within 10 business days from the date of the most recent discussion or communication with the family. The notice will inform the family of the right to appeal the PHA's decision through an informal hearing (if applicable) or the grievance process (see Chapter 14).

## **2-II.F. PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH HEARING OR VISION IMPAIRMENTS**

HUD regulations require the PHA to take reasonable steps to ensure that persons with disabilities related to hearing and vision have reasonable access to the PHA's programs and services [24 CFR 8.6].

At the initial point of contact with each applicant, the PHA shall inform all applicants of alternative forms of communication that can be used other than plain language paperwork.

### PHA Policy

To meet the needs of persons with hearing impairments, TTD/TTY (text telephone display / teletype) communication will be available.

To meet the needs of persons with vision impairments, large-print and audio versions of key program documents will be made available upon request. When visual aids are used in public meetings or presentations, or in meetings with PHA staff, one-on-one assistance will be provided upon request.

Additional examples of alternative forms of communication are sign language interpretation; having material explained orally by staff; or having a third party representative (a friend, relative or advocate, named by the applicant) to receive, interpret and explain housing materials and be present at all meetings.

## **2-II.G. PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY**

The PHA must comply with a variety of regulations pertaining to physical accessibility, including the following.

- Notice PIH 2010-26
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968
- The Fair Housing Act of 1988

The PHA's policies concerning physical accessibility must be readily available to applicants and resident families. They can be found in three key documents.

- This policy, the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy, describes the key policies that govern the PHA's responsibilities with regard to physical accessibility.
- Notice PIH 2010-26 summarizes information about pertinent laws and implementing regulations related to nondiscrimination and accessibility in federally-funded housing programs.
- The PHA Plan provides information about self-evaluation, needs assessment, and transition plans.

The design, construction, or alteration of PHA facilities must conform to the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS). Notice PIH 2010-26 contains specific information on calculating the percentages of units for meeting UFAS requirements.

Newly-constructed facilities must be designed to be readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. Alterations to existing facilities must be accessible to the maximum extent feasible, defined as not imposing an undue financial and administrative burden on the operations of the public housing program.

## **2-II.H. DENIAL OR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE**

A PHA's decision to deny or terminate the assistance of a family that includes a person with disabilities is subject to consideration of reasonable accommodation [24 CFR 966.7].

When applicants with disabilities are denied assistance, the notice of denial must inform them of their right to request an informal hearing [24 CFR 960.208(a)].

When a family's lease is terminated, the notice of termination must inform the family of their right to request a hearing in accordance with the PHA's grievance process [24 CFR 966.4(l)(3)(ii)].

When reviewing reasonable accommodation requests, the PHA must consider whether reasonable accommodation will allow the family to overcome the problem that led to the PHA's decision to deny or terminate assistance. If a reasonable accommodation will allow the family to meet the requirements, the PHA must make the accommodation [24 CFR 966.7].

In addition, the PHA must provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities to participate in the hearing process [24 CFR 966.56(h)].



## **PART III: IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)**

### **2-III.A. OVERVIEW**

Language for Limited English Proficiency Persons (LEP) can be a barrier to accessing important benefits or services, understanding and exercising important rights, complying with applicable responsibilities, or understanding other information provided by the public housing program. In certain circumstances, failure to ensure that LEP persons can effectively participate in or benefit from federally-assisted programs and activities may violate the prohibition under Title VI against discrimination on the basis of national origin. This part incorporates the Final Guidance to Federal Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons, published January 22, 2007, in the *Federal Register*.

The PHA will take affirmative steps to communicate with people who need services or information in a language other than English. These persons will be referred to as Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

LEP persons are defined as persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English. For the purposes of this Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy, LEP persons are public housing applicants and resident families, and parents and family members of applicants and resident families.

In order to determine the level of access needed by LEP persons, the PHA will balance the following four factors: (1) the number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the public housing program; (2) the frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with the program; (3) the nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program to people's lives; and (4) the resources available to the PHA and costs. Balancing these four factors will ensure meaningful access by LEP persons to critical services while not imposing undue burdens on the PHA.

## **2-III.B. ORAL INTERPRETATION**

The PHA will offer competent interpretation services free of charge, upon request, to the LEP person.

### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will utilize a language line for telephone interpreter services.

When exercising the option to conduct remote hearings, however, the PHA will coordinate with a remote interpretation service, which, when available uses video conferencing technology rather than voice-only interpretation.

Where LEP persons desire, they will be permitted to use, at their own expense, an interpreter of their own choosing, in place of or as a supplement to the free language services offered by the PHA. The PHA, at its discretion, may choose to use the language services even when LEP persons desire to use an interpreter of their own choosing. The interpreter may be a family member or friend. If the interpreter chosen by the family is a minor, the PHA will not rely on the minor to serve as an interpreter.

The PHA will analyze the various kinds of contacts it has with the public, to assess language needs and decide what reasonable steps should be taken. “Reasonable steps” may not be reasonable where the costs imposed substantially exceed the benefits.

Where feasible, according to its language assistance plan (LAP), the PHA will train and hire bilingual staff to be available to act as interpreters and translators, will pool resources with other PHAs, and will standardize documents.

## **2-III.C. WRITTEN TRANSLATION**

Translation is the replacement of a written text from one language into an equivalent written text in another language.

### **PHA Policy**

In order to comply with written-translation obligations, the PHA will take the following steps:

The PHA will provide written translations of vital documents for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes 5 percent or 1,000 persons, whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered. Translation of other documents, if needed, can be provided orally; or

If there are fewer than 50 persons in a language group that reaches the 5 percent trigger, the PHA may not translate vital written materials, but will provide written notice in the primary language of the LEP language group of the right to receive competent oral interpretation of those written materials, free of cost.

The PHA will insert a “Translation Box” in all correspondence that may contain a notice of an adverse action that the PHA is taking against the tenant. A

“Translation Box” states in various languages “This is important housing information. If you do not understand it have someone translate it for you now.”

## **2-III.D. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

After completing the four-factor analysis and deciding what language assistance services are appropriate, the PHA shall determine whether it is necessary to develop a written implementation plan to address the identified needs of the LEP populations it serves.

If the PHA determines that it is not necessary to develop a written implementation plan, the absence of a written plan does not obviate the underlying obligation to ensure meaningful access by LEP persons to the PHA's public housing program and services.

### PHA Policy

If it is determined that the PHA serves very few LEP persons, and the PHA has very limited resources, the PHA will not develop a written LEP plan, but will consider alternative ways to articulate in a reasonable manner a plan for providing meaningful access. Entities having significant contact with LEP persons, such as schools, grassroots and faith-based organizations, community groups, and groups working with new immigrants will be contacted for input into the process.

If the PHA determines it is appropriate to develop a written LEP plan, the following five steps will be taken: (1) Identifying LEP individuals who need language assistance; (2) identifying language assistance measures; (3) training staff; (4) providing notice to LEP persons; and (5) monitoring and updating the LEP plan.

The PHA will insert a "Translation Box" in all correspondence that may contain a notice of an adverse action that the PHA is taking against the tenant. A "Translation Box" states in various languages "This is important housing information. If you do not understand it have someone translate it for you now."



<b>EXHIBIT 2-1: DEFINITION OF A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY UNDER FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS [24 CFR Parts 8.3 and 100.201]</b>
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A person with a disability, as defined under federal civil rights laws, is any person who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual, or
- Has a record of such impairment, or
- Is regarded as having such impairment

The phrase “physical or mental impairment” includes:

- Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic or disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genito-urinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; or
- Any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities. The term “physical or mental impairment” includes, but is not limited to: such diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental retardation, emotional illness, drug addiction and alcoholism.

“Major life activities” includes, but is not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, learning, and/or working.

“Has a record of such impairment” means has a history of, or has been misclassified as having, a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major live activities.

“Is regarded as having an impairment” is defined as having a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit one or more major life activities but is treated by a public entity (such as the PHA) as constituting such a limitation; has none of the impairments defined in this section but is treated by a public entity as having such an impairment; or has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, only as a result of the attitudes of others toward that impairment.

The definition of a person with disabilities does not include:

- Current illegal drug users
- People whose alcohol use interferes with the rights of others
- Persons who objectively pose a direct threat or substantial risk of harm to others that cannot be controlled with a reasonable accommodation under the public housing program

The above definition of disability determines whether an applicant or participant is entitled to any of the protections of federal disability civil rights laws. Thus, a person who does not meet this definition of disability is not entitled to a reasonable accommodation under federal civil rights and fair housing laws and regulations.

The HUD definition of a person with a disability is much narrower than the civil rights definition of disability. The HUD definition of a person with a disability is used for purposes of receiving the disabled family preference, the \$400 elderly/disabled household deduction, the allowance for medical expenses, or the allowance for disability assistance expenses.

The definition of a person with a disability for purposes of granting a reasonable accommodation request is much broader than the HUD definition of disability. Many people will not qualify as a disabled person under the public housing program, yet an accommodation is needed to provide equal opportunity.

## Chapter 3

### ELIGIBILITY

#### INTRODUCTION

The PHA is responsible for ensuring that every individual and family admitted to the public housing program meets all program eligibility requirements. This includes any individual approved to join the family after the family has been admitted to the program. The family must provide any information needed by the PHA to confirm eligibility and determine the level of the family's assistance.

To be eligible for the public housing program:

- The applicant family must:
  - Qualify as a family as defined by HUD and the PHA.
  - Have income at or below HUD-specified income limits.
  - Qualify on the basis of citizenship or the eligible immigrant status of family members.
  - Provide social security number information for household members as required.
  - Consent to the PHA's collection and use of family information as provided for in PHA-provided consent forms.
  - Not currently be receiving a duplicative subsidy.
- The PHA must determine that the current or past behavior of household members does not include activities that are prohibited by HUD or the PHA.

This chapter contains three parts:

Part I: Definitions of Family and Household Members. This part contains HUD and PHA definitions of family and household members and explains initial and ongoing eligibility issues related to these members.

Part II: Basic Eligibility Criteria. This part discusses income eligibility, and rules regarding citizenship, social security numbers, and family consent.

Part III: Denial of Admission. This part covers factors related to an applicant's past or current conduct (e.g. criminal activity) that can cause the PHA to deny admission.





## **PART I: DEFINITIONS OF FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS**

### **3-I.A. OVERVIEW**

Some eligibility criteria and program rules vary depending upon the composition of the family requesting assistance. In addition, some requirements apply to the family as a whole and others apply to individual persons who will live in the public housing unit. This part provides information that is needed to correctly identify family and household members and explains HUD's eligibility rules.

### **3-I.B. FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD [24 CFR 5.105(a)(2), 24 CFR 5.403, FR Notice 02/03/12 and Notice PIH 2014-20]**

The terms *family* and *household* have different meanings in the public housing program.

#### **Family**

To be eligible for admission, an applicant must qualify as a family. *Family* as defined by HUD, includes but is not limited to the following, regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status, a single person, who may be an elderly person, disabled person, near-elderly person, or any other single person; or a group of persons residing together. Such group includes, but is not limited to a family with or without children (a child who is temporarily away from the home because of placement in foster care is considered a member of the family), an elderly family, a near-elderly family, a disabled family, a displaced family, or the remaining member of a tenant family. The PHA has the discretion to determine if any other group of persons qualifies as a family.

*Gender Identity* means actual or perceived gender characteristics.

*Sexual orientation* means homosexuality, heterosexuality, or bisexuality.

#### **PHA Policy**

A family also includes two or more individuals who are not related by blood, marriage, adoption, or other operation of law, but who either can demonstrate that they have lived together previously or certify that each individual's income and other resources will be available to meet the needs of the family.

Each family must identify the individuals to be included in the family at the time of application and must promptly update this information if the family's composition changes.

#### **Household**

*Household* is a broader term that includes additional people who, with the PHA's permission, live in a public housing unit, such as live-in aides, foster children, and foster adults.

### **3-I.C. FAMILY BREAKUP AND REMAINING MEMBER OF TENANT FAMILY**

#### **Family Breakup**

Except under the following conditions, the PHA has discretion to determine which members of an assisted family continue to receive assistance if the family breaks up:

- If the family breakup results from and occurrence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the PHA must ensure that the victim retains assistance (For documentation requirements and policies related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, see section 16-VII.D of this plan.)
- If a court determines the disposition of property between members of the assisted family, the PHA is bound by the court's determination of which family members continue to receive assistance.

#### **PHA Policy**

When a family on the waiting list breaks up into two otherwise eligible families, only one of the new families may retain the original application position. Other former family members may submit a new application if the waiting list is open.

If a family breaks up into two otherwise eligible families while living in public housing, only one of the new families will retain occupancy of the unit.

If a court determines the disposition of property between members of an applicant or resident family, the PHA will abide by the court's determination.

In the absence of a judicial decision or an agreement among the original family members, the PHA will determine which family will retain their placement on the waiting list or continue in occupancy. In making its determination, the PHA will take into consideration the following factors: (1) the interest of any minor children, including custody arrangements; (2) the interest of any ill, elderly, or disabled family members; (3) the interest of any family member who is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, including a family member who is forced to leave a public housing unit as a result of such actual or threatened abuse, and provides documentation in accordance with section 16-VII.D of this ACOP; (4) any possible risks to family members as a result of criminal activity, and (5) the recommendations of social service professionals.

#### **Remaining Member of a Tenant Family [24 CFR 5.403]**

The HUD definition of family includes the *remaining member of a tenant family*, which is a member of a resident family who remains in the unit when other members of the family have left the unit [PH Occ GB, p. 26]. Household members such as live-in aides, foster children, and foster adults do not qualify as remaining members of a family.

If dependents are the only “remaining members of a tenant family” and there is no family member able to assume the responsibilities of the head of household, see Chapter 6, Section 6-I.B, for the policy on “Caretakers for a Child.”

### **3-I.D. HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD [24 CFR 5.504(b)]**

*Head of household* means the adult member of the family who is considered the head for purposes of determining income eligibility and rent. The head of household is responsible for ensuring that the family fulfills all of its responsibilities under the program, alone or in conjunction with a cohead or spouse.

#### PHA Policy

The family may designate any qualified family member as the head of household.

The head of household must have the legal capacity to enter into a lease under state and local law. A minor who is emancipated under state law by court decree may be designated as head of household.

A family may designate an elderly or disabled family member as a head of household solely to qualify the family as an Elderly or Disabled Family provided that the person is at least partially responsible for paying the rent.

### **3-I.E. SPOUSE, COHEAD, AND OTHER ADULT**

A family may have a spouse or cohead, but not both [HUD-50058 IB, p. 13].

*Spouse* means the marriage partner of the head of household.

#### PHA Policy

A *marriage partner* includes the partner in a "common law" marriage as defined in state law. The term "spouse" does not apply to friends, roommates, or significant others who are not marriage partners. A minor who is emancipated under state law may be designated as a spouse.

A *cohead* is an individual in the household who is equally responsible with the head of household for ensuring that the family fulfills all of its responsibilities under the program, but who is not a spouse. A family can have only one cohead.

#### PHA Policy

Minors who are emancipated by court decree under state law may be designated as a cohead.

*Other adult* means a family member, other than the head, spouse, or cohead, who is 18 years of age or older. Foster adults and live-in aides are not considered other adults [HUD-50058 IB, p. 14].

### **3-I.F. DEPENDENT [24 CFR 5.603]**

A *dependent* is a family member who is under 18 years of age or a person of any age who is a person with a disability or a full-time student, except that the following persons can never be dependents: the head of household, spouse, cohead, foster children/adults and live-in aides. Identifying each dependent in the family is important because each dependent qualifies the family for a deduction from annual income as described in Chapter 6.

#### **Joint Custody of Dependents**

##### PHA Policy

Dependents that are subject to a joint custody arrangement will be considered a member of the family if they live with the applicant or resident family 50 percent or more of the time.

When more than one applicant or assisted family (regardless of program) are claiming the same dependents as family members, the family with primary custody at the time of the initial examination or reexamination will be able to claim the dependents. If there is a dispute about which family should claim them, the PHA will make the determination based on available documents such as court orders, an IRS income tax return showing which family has claimed the child for income tax purposes, school records, or other credible documentation. The PHA may also use school registration to determine which household is considered the primary residence of the child. The PHA will use EIV existing tenant search report or the multiple subsidy report to help clarify which family has claimed the dependent previously.

### **3-I.G. FULL-TIME STUDENT [24 CFR 5.603]**

A *full-time student* (FTS) is a person who is attending school or vocational training on a full-time basis. The time commitment or subject load that is needed to determine if attendance is full-time is defined by the educational institution.

Identifying each FTS is important because (1) each family member that is an FTS, other than the head, spouse, or cohead, qualifies the family for a dependent deduction and (2) the income of such an FTS is treated differently from the income of other family members.

### **3-I.H. ELDERLY AND NEAR-ELDERLY PERSONS, AND ELDERLY FAMILY [24 CFR 5.100, 5.403, 945.105, and FR Notice 02/03/12]**

#### **Elderly Persons**

An *elderly person* is a person who is at least 62 years of age.

#### **Near-Elderly Persons**

A *near-elderly person* is a person who is 50-61 years of age.

#### **Elderly Family**

An *elderly family* is one in which the head, spouse, cohead, or sole member is an elderly person. Identifying elderly families is important because these families qualify for the elderly family allowance and the medical allowance as described in Chapter 6 and may qualify for a particular type of development as noted in Chapter 4.

### **3-I.I. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND DISABLED FAMILY [24 CFR 5.403, FR Notice 02/03/12]**

#### **Persons with Disabilities**

Under the public housing program, special rules apply to persons with disabilities and to any family whose head, spouse, or cohead is a person with disabilities. The technical definitions of individual with handicaps and persons with disabilities are provided in Exhibit 3-1 at the end of this chapter. These definitions are used for a number of purposes including ensuring that persons with disabilities are not discriminated against based upon disability.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the PHA must make all aspects of the public housing program accessible to persons with disabilities and consider requests for reasonable accommodations when a person's disability limits their full access to the unit, the program, or the PHA's services.

#### **Disabled Family**

A *disabled family* is one in which the head, spouse, or cohead is a person with disabilities. Identifying disabled families is important because these families qualify for the disabled family allowance and the medical allowance as described in Chapter 6 and may qualify for a particular type of development as noted in Chapter 4.

Even though persons with drug or alcohol dependencies are considered persons with disabilities for the purpose of non-discrimination, this does not prevent the PHA from denying admission or taking action under the lease for reasons related to alcohol and drug abuse in accordance with the policies found in Part III of this chapter and in Chapter 13.

### **3-I.J. GUESTS [24 CFR 5.100]**

A *guest* is defined as 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 lease must provide that the tenant has the right to exclusive use and occupancy of the leased unit by the members of the household authorized to reside in the unit in accordance with the lease, including reasonable accommodation of their guests [24 CFR 966.4(d)]. The head of household is responsible for the conduct of visitors and guests, inside the unit as well as anywhere on or near PHA premises [24 CFR 966.4(f)].

#### **PHA Policy**

A resident family must notify in writing the PHA when overnight guests will be staying in the unit for more than three days. A guest can remain in the unit no longer than 14 consecutive days or a total of 30 cumulative calendar days during any 12 month period.

A family may request an exception to this policy for valid reasons (e.g., care of a relative recovering from a medical procedure expected to last 20 consecutive days). An exception will not be made unless the family can identify and provide medical documentation and proof of the residence to which the guest will return.

Children who are subject to a joint custody arrangement or for whom a family has visitation privileges, that are not included as a family member because they live outside of the public housing unit more than 51 percent of the time, are not subject to the time limitations of guests as described above.

Former residents who have been evicted are not permitted as overnight guests.

Guests who represent the public housing unit address as their residence address or address of record for receipt of benefits or any other purposes will be considered unauthorized occupants. In addition, guests who remain in the unit beyond the allowable time limit will be considered to be unauthorized occupants, and their presence constitutes a violation of the lease.

If management deems it necessary to verify a person's current address, a minimum of two of these documents will be requested and must be provided within 10 business days:

- Car registration
- Driver's License or State Identification Card
- Current mail such as utility bills, cell phone bills and paystubs
- Lease or Rental Agreement with the landlord's name, address and phone number

If the family refuses or fails to provide evidence within the time frame, the PHA may pursue termination of the lease.

Whispering Pines: Residents must accompany guests on the property at all times. Guests are not allowed to use the laundry facilities.

### **3-I.K. FOSTER CHILDREN AND FOSTER ADULTS**

*Foster adults* are usually persons with disabilities, unrelated to the tenant family, who are unable to live alone [24 CFR 5.609(c)(2)].

The term *foster child* is not specifically defined by the regulations.

Foster children and foster adults that are living with an applicant or resident family are considered household members but not family members. The income of foster children/adults is not counted in family annual income and foster children/adults do not qualify for a dependent deduction [24 CFR 5.603 and HUD-50058 IB, pp. 13-14].

#### **PHA Policy**

A foster child is a child that is in the legal guardianship or custody of a state, county, or private adoption or foster care agency, yet is cared for by foster parents in foster parent's homes, under some kind of short-term or long-term foster care arrangement with the custodial agency. The PHA must have documentation from the custodial agency for this arrangement.

Children that are temporarily absent from the home as a result of placement in foster care are discussed in Section 3-I.L.



### **3-I.L. ABSENT FAMILY MEMBERS**

Individuals may be temporarily or permanently absent from the unit for a variety of reasons including educational activities, placement in foster care, employment, and illness.

#### **Definitions of Temporarily and Permanently Absent**

##### PHA Policy

Generally, an individual who is or is expected to be absent from the public housing unit for 180 consecutive days or less is considered temporarily absent and continues to be considered a family member. Generally, an individual who is or is expected to be absent from the public housing unit for more than 180 consecutive days is considered permanently absent and no longer a family member. Exceptions to this general policy are discussed below.

#### **Absent Students**

##### PHA Policy

When someone who has been considered a family member attends school away from home, the person will continue to be considered a family member unless information becomes available to the PHA indicating that the student has established a separate household or the family declares that the student has established a separate household.

For a student to remain a household member the family must certify that:

- 1) The student lives in the unit at least 51% of the time OR
- 2) The student has a campus housing agreement for the school year and will return to the household for at least three months out of the year.

#### **Absences Due to Placement in Foster Care [24 CFR 5.403]**

Children temporarily absent from the home as a result of placement in foster care are considered members of the family.

##### PHA Policy

If a child has been placed in foster care, the PHA will verify with the appropriate agency whether and when the child is expected to be returned to the home. Unless the agency confirms that the child has been permanently removed from the home or is not expected to return to the family within 6 months, the child will be counted as a family member.

## **Absent Head, Spouse, or Cohead**

### PHA Policy

An employed head, spouse, or cohead absent from the unit more than 180 consecutive days due to employment will continue to be considered a family member.

## **Individuals Confined for Medical Reasons**

### PHA Policy

An individual confined to a nursing home or hospital on a permanent basis is not considered a family member.

If there is a question about the status of a family member, the PHA will request verification from a responsible medical professional and will rely upon this verification. If the responsible medical professional cannot provide a verification, the person generally will be considered temporarily absent. The family may present evidence that the family member is confined on a permanent basis and request that the person not be considered a family member.

## **Return of Permanently Absent Family Members**

### PHA Policy

The family must request PHA approval for the return of any adult family members that the PHA has determined to be permanently absent. Each individual is subject to the eligibility and screening requirements discussed in this chapter.

If a child has been returned to the family, the family must notify the PHA in writing within 5 days of the return. Failure to report could result in termination of the lease.

### **3-I.M. LIVE-IN AIDE**

*Live-in aide* means a person who resides with one or more elderly persons, or near-elderly persons, or persons with disabilities, and who: (1) is determined to be essential to the care and well-being of the person(s), (2) is not obligated for the support of the person(s), and (3) would not be living in the unit except to provide the necessary supportive services [24 CFR 5.403].

The PHA must approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities in accordance with 24 CFR 8.

A live-in aide is considered a household member but not a family member. The income of the live-in aide is not counted in determining the annual income of the family [24 CFR 5.609(c)(5)]. Relatives may be approved as live-in aides if they meet all of the criteria defining a live-in aide. However, a relative who serves as a live-in aide is not considered a family member and would not be considered a remaining member of a tenant family.

#### PHA Policy

A family's request for a live-in aide may be made orally or in writing. The PHA will verify the need for a live-in aide, if necessary, with a reliable, knowledgeable professional as provided by the family, such as a doctor, social worker, or case worker. For continued approval, the family may be required to submit a new, written request—subject to PHA verification—at each annual reexamination.

In addition, the family and live-in aide will be required to submit a certification stating that the live-in aide is (1) not obligated for the support of the person(s) needing the care, and (2) would not be living in the unit except to provide the necessary supportive services and (3) is not considered a member of the tenant family.

The PHA has the discretion not to approve a particular person as a live-in aide, and may withdraw such approval, if [24 CFR 966.4(d)(3)(i)]:

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

- The person has a history of 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.

- An EIV report indicates that the Live-In Aide owes money to a Housing Authority or has been evicted for fraud from assisted housing.

Within 10 business days of receiving a request for a live-in aide, including all required documentation related to the request, the PHA will notify the family of its decision in writing.

The PHA will run a criminal background check on Live-in Aides and Personal Care Attendants.

## **PART II: BASIC ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

### **3-II.A. INCOME ELIGIBILITY AND TARGETING**

#### **Income Limits**

HUD is required by law to establish income limits that determine the income eligibility of applicants for HUD's assisted housing programs, including the public housing program. The income limits are published annually and are based on HUD estimates of the median incomes for families of different sizes in a particular area or county.

#### **Types of Low-Income Families [24 CFR 5.603(b)]**

*Low-income family.* A family whose annual income does not exceed 80 percent of the median income for the area, adjusted for family size.

*Very low-income family.* A family whose annual income does not exceed 50 percent of the median income for the area, adjusted for family size.

*Extremely low-income family.* A family whose annual income does not exceed *the federal poverty level* or 30 percent of the median income for the area whichever number is higher, Area median income is determined by HUD, with adjustments for smaller or larger families. HUD may establish income ceilings higher or lower than 30, 50, or 80 percent of the median income for an area if HUD finds that such variations are necessary because of unusually high or low family incomes.

HUD also publishes over-income limits annually, but these are not used at admission. Over-income limits will be discussed in Chapter 13.

#### **Using Income Limits for Eligibility [24 CFR 960.201]**

Income limits are used to determine eligibility at admission. Eligibility is established by comparing a family's annual income with HUD's published income limits. To be income eligible, a family must be a *low-income* family.

### **Using Income Limits for Targeting [24 CFR 960.202(b)]**

At least 40 percent of the families admitted from the PHA waiting list to the public housing program during a PHA fiscal year must be *extremely low-income* families. This is called the “basic targeting requirement.”

If admissions of extremely low-income families to the PHA’s housing choice voucher program during a PHA fiscal year exceed the 75 percent minimum targeting requirement for that program, such excess shall be credited against the PHA’s public housing basic targeting requirement for the same fiscal year.

The fiscal year credit for housing choice voucher program admissions that exceed the minimum voucher program targeting requirement must not exceed the lower of:

- Ten percent of public housing waiting list admissions during the PHA fiscal year
- Ten percent of waiting list admission to the PHA’s housing choice voucher program during the PHA fiscal year
- The number of qualifying low-income families who commence occupancy during the fiscal year of public housing units located in census tracts with a poverty rate of 30 percent or more. For this purpose, qualifying low-income family means a low-income family other than an extremely low-income family.

For discussion of how income targeting is used in tenant selection, see Chapter 4.

### **3-II.B. CITIZENSHIP OR ELIGIBLE IMMIGRATION STATUS [24 CFR 5, Subpart E]**

Housing assistance is available only to individuals who are U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals (herein referred to as citizens and nationals), or noncitizens that have eligible immigration status. At least one family member must be a citizen, national, or noncitizen with eligible immigration status in order for the family to qualify for any level of assistance.

All applicant families must be notified of the requirement to submit evidence of their citizenship status when they apply. Where feasible, and in accordance with the PHA's Limited English Proficiency Plan, the notice must be in a language that is understood by the individual if the individual is not proficient in English.

#### **Declaration [24 CFR 5.508]**

HUD requires each family member to declare whether the individual is a citizen, a national, or an eligible noncitizen, except those members who elect not to contend that they have eligible immigration status. Those who elect not to contend their status are considered to be ineligible noncitizens. For citizens, nationals and eligible noncitizens the declaration must be signed personally by the head, spouse, cohead, and any other family member 18 or older, and by a parent or guardian for minors. The family must identify in writing any family members who elect not to contend their immigration status (see Ineligible Noncitizens below). No declaration is required for live-in aides, foster children, or foster adults.

#### ***U.S. Citizens and Nationals***

In general, citizens and nationals are required to submit only a signed declaration that claims their status. However, HUD regulations permit the PHA to request additional documentation of their status, such as a passport.

#### **PHA Policy**

Family members who declare citizenship or national status will not be required to provide additional documentation unless the PHA receives information indicating that an individual's declaration may not be accurate. The PHA will use the SAVE system to document eligibility.

#### ***Eligible Noncitizens***

In addition to providing a signed declaration, those declaring eligible noncitizen status must sign a verification consent form and cooperate with PHA efforts to verify their immigration status as described in Chapter 7. The documentation required for establishing eligible noncitizen status varies depending upon factors such as the date the person entered the U.S., the conditions under which eligible immigration status has been granted, the person's age, and the date on which the family began receiving HUD-funded assistance.

Lawful residents of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau, together known as the Freely Associated States, or FAS, are eligible for housing assistance under section 141 of the Compacts of Free Association between the U.S. Government and the Governments of the FAS [Public Law 106-504].

### ***Ineligible Noncitizens***

Those noncitizens who do not wish to contend their immigration status are required to have their names listed on a noncontending family members listing, signed by the head, spouse, or cohead (regardless of citizenship status), indicating their ineligible immigration status. The PHA is not required to verify a family member's ineligible status and is not required to report an individual's unlawful presence in the U.S. to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Providing housing assistance to noncitizen students is prohibited [24 CFR 5.522]. This prohibition extends to the noncitizen spouse of a noncitizen student as well as to minor children who accompany or follow to join the noncitizen student. Such prohibition does not extend to the citizen spouse of a noncitizen student or to the children of the citizen spouse and noncitizen student. Such a family is eligible for prorated assistance as a mixed family.

### **Mixed Families**

A family is eligible for admission as long as at least one member is a citizen, national, or eligible noncitizen. Families that include eligible and ineligible individuals are considered *mixed families*. Such families will be given notice that their assistance will be prorated, and that they may request a hearing if they contest this determination. See Chapter 6 for a discussion of how rents are prorated, and Chapter 14 for a discussion of informal hearing procedures.

### **Ineligible Families [24 CFR 5.514(d), (e), and (f)]**

A PHA may elect to provide assistance to a family before the verification of the eligibility of the individual or one family member [24 CFR 5.512(b)]. Otherwise, no individual or family may be assisted prior to the affirmative establishment by the PHA that the individual or at least one family member is eligible [24 CFR 5.512(a)].

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will not provide assistance to a family before the verification of at least one family member as a citizen, national, or eligible noncitizen.

When a PHA determines that an applicant family does not include any citizens, nationals, or eligible noncitizens, following the verification process, the family will be sent a written notice within 10 business days of the determination.

The notice will explain the reasons for the denial of assistance and will advise the family of its right to request an appeal to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and to request a grievance hearing with the PHA. The grievance hearing with the PHA may be requested at the conclusion of the USCIS appeal process. The notice must also inform the applicant family that assistance may not be delayed until the conclusion of the USCIS appeal process, but that it may be delayed pending the completion of the grievance hearing process.

Grievance hearing procedures are contained in Chapter 14.

### **Time Frame for Determination of Citizenship Status [24 CFR 5.508(g)]**

For new occupants joining the resident family the PHA must verify status at the first interim or regular reexamination following the person's occupancy, whichever comes first.

If an individual qualifies for a time extension for the submission of required documents, the PHA must grant such an extension for no more than 30 days [24 CFR 5.508(h)].

Each family member is required to submit evidence of eligible status only one time during continuous occupancy.

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will verify the status of applicants at the time other eligibility factors are determined.

### **3-II.C. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS [24 CFR 5.216 and 5.218, Notice PIH 2018-24]**

The applicant and all members of the applicant's household must disclose the complete and accurate social security number (SSN) assigned to each household member, and the documentation necessary to verify each SSN. If a child under age six has been added to an applicant family within six months prior to program admission, an otherwise eligible family may be admitted to the program and must disclose and document the child's SSN within 90 days of admission. A detailed discussion of acceptable documentation is provided in Chapter 7.

**Note:** These requirements do not apply to noncitizens who do not contend eligible immigration status.

In addition, each participant who has not previously disclosed an SSN, has previously disclosed an SSN that HUD or the SSA determined was invalid, or has been issued a new SSN must submit their complete and accurate SSN and the documentation required to verify the SSN at the time of the next interim or annual reexamination or recertification. Participants age 62 or older as of January 31, 2010, whose determination of eligibility was begun before January 31, 2010, are exempt from this requirement and remain exempt even if they move to a new assisted unit.

The PHA must deny assistance to an applicant family if they do not meet the SSN disclosure and documentation requirements contained in 24 CFR 5.216.



### **3-II.D. FAMILY CONSENT TO RELEASE OF INFORMATION [24 CFR 5.230]**

HUD requires each adult family member, and the head of household, spouse, or co-head, regardless of age, to sign form HUD-9886, Authorization for the Release of Information Privacy Act Notice, the form HUD-52675, Debts Owed to Public Housing Agencies and Terminations and other consent forms as needed to collect information relevant to the family's eligibility and level of assistance. Chapter 7 provides detailed information concerning the consent forms and verification requirements.

The PHA must deny admission to the program if any member of the applicant family fails to sign and submit consent forms which allow the PHA to obtain information that the PHA has determined is necessary in administration of the public housing program [24 CFR 960.259(a) and (b)].

### **3-II.E. EIV SYSTEM SEARCHES [Notice PIH 2018-18; EIV FAQs; EIV System Training 9/30/20]**

#### **Existing Tenant Search**

Prior to admission to the program, the PHA must search for all household members using the EIV Existing Tenant Search module. The PHA must review the reports for any SSA matches involving another PHA or a multifamily entity and follow up on any issues identified. The PHA must provide the family with a copy of the Existing Tenant Search results if requested. At no time may any family member receive duplicative assistance.

If the tenant is a new admission to the PHA, and a match is identified at a multifamily property, the PHA must report the program admission date to the multifamily property and document the notification in the tenant file. The family must provide documentation of move-out from the assisted unit, as applicable.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will contact the PHA or owner identified in the report to confirm that the family has moved out of the unit and obtain documentation of current tenancy status, including a form HUD-50058 or 50059, as applicable, showing an end of participation. The PHA will only approve assistance contingent upon the move-out from the currently occupied assisted unit.

#### **Debts Owed to PHAs and Terminations**

All adult household members must sign the form HUD-52675, Debts Owed to Public Housing and Terminations. Prior to admission to the program, the PHA must search for each adult family member in the Debts Owed to PHAs and Terminations module.

If a current or former tenant disputes the information in the module, the tenant should contact the PHA directly in writing to dispute the information and provide any documentation that supports the dispute. If the PHA determines that the disputed information is incorrect, the PHA will update or delete the record from EIV. Former tenants may dispute debt and termination information for a period of up to three years from the end of participation date in the program.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will require each adult household member to sign the form HUD-52675 once at the eligibility determination. Any new members added to the household after admission will be required to sign the form HUD-52675 prior to being added to the household.

The PHA will search the Debts Owed to PHAs and Terminations module as part of the eligibility determination for new households and as part of the screening process for any household members added after the household is admitted to the program. If any information on debts or terminations is returned by the search, the PHA will determine if this information warrants a denial in accordance with the policies in Part III of this chapter.

### **Income and IVT Reports**

For each new admission, the PHA is required to review the EIV Income and IVT Reports to confirm and validate family reported income within 120 days of the IMS/PIC submission date of the new admission. The PHA must print and maintain copies of the EIV Income and IVT reports in the tenant file and resolve any discrepancies with the family within 60 days of the EIV Income or IVT report dates.





## **PART III: DENIAL OF ADMISSION**

### **3-III.A. OVERVIEW**

A family that does not meet the eligibility criteria discussed in Parts I and II, must be denied admission.

In addition, HUD requires or permits the PHA to deny admission based on certain types of current or past behaviors of family members as discussed in this part. The PHA's authority in this area is limited by the Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA), which expressly prohibits the denial of admission to an otherwise qualified applicant on the basis or as a direct result of the fact that the applicant is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking [24 CFR 5.2005(b)].

While the regulations state that the PHA must prohibit admission for certain types of criminal activity and give the PHA the option to deny for other types of previous criminal history, more recent HUD rules and OGC guidance must also be taken into consideration when determining whether a particular individual's criminal history merits denial of admission.

When considering any denial of admission, PHAs may not use arrest records as the basis for the denial. Further, HUD does not require the adoption of "One Strike" policies and reminds PHAs of their obligation to safeguard the due process rights of applicants and tenants [Notice PIH 2015-19].

HUD's Office of General Counsel issued a memo on April 4, 2016, regarding the application of Fair Housing Act standards to the use of criminal records. This memo states that a PHA violates the Fair Housing Act when their policy or practice has an unjustified discriminatory effect, even when the PHA had no intention to discriminate. Where a policy or practice that restricts admission based on criminal history has a disparate impact on a particular race, national origin, or other protected class, that policy or practice is in violation of the Fair Housing Act if it is not necessary to serve a substantial, legitimate, nondiscriminatory interest of the PHA, or if that interest could be served by another practice that has a less discriminatory effect [OGC Memo 4/4/16].

PHAs who impose blanket prohibitions on any person with any conviction record, no matter when the conviction occurred, what the underlying conduct entailed, or what the convicted person has done since then will be unable to show that such policy or practice is necessary to achieve a substantial, legitimate, nondiscriminatory interest. Even a PHA with a more tailored policy or practice that excludes individuals with only certain types of convictions must still prove that its policy is necessary. To do this, the PHA must show that its policy accurately distinguishes between criminal conduct that indicates a demonstrable risk to resident safety and property and criminal conduct that does not.

This part covers the following topics:

- Required denial of admission
- Other permitted reasons for denial of admission
- Screening
- Criteria for deciding to deny admission
- Prohibition against denial of admission to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking
- Notice of eligibility or denial

### **3-III.B. REQUIRED DENIAL OF ADMISSION [24 CFR 960.204]**

PHAs are required to establish standards that prohibit admission of an applicant to the public housing program if they have engaged in certain criminal activity or if the PHA has reasonable cause to believe that a household member's current use or pattern of use of illegal drugs, or current abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

Where the statute requires that the PHA prohibit admission for a prescribed period of time after some disqualifying behavior or event, the PHA may choose to continue that prohibition for a longer period of time [24 CFR 960.203(c)(3)(ii)].

HUD requires the PHA to deny assistance in the following cases:

- Any member of the household has been evicted from federally assisted housing in the last three years for drug-related criminal activity. HUD permits but does not require the PHA to admit an otherwise-eligible family if the household member has completed a PHA-approved drug rehabilitation program or the circumstances which led to eviction no longer exist (e.g. the person involved in the criminal activity no longer lives in the household).

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will admit an otherwise-eligible family who was evicted from federally assisted housing within the past three years for drug-related criminal activity, if the PHA is able to verify that the household member who engaged in the criminal activity has completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program approved by the PHA, or the person who committed the crime is no longer living in the household.

- The PHA determines that any household member is currently engaged in the use of illegal drugs. *Drug* means a controlled substance as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act [21 U.S.C. 802]. *Currently engaged in the illegal use of a drug* means a person has engaged in the behavior recently enough to justify a reasonable belief that there is continuing illegal drug use by a household member [24 CFR 960.205(b)(1)].

#### PHA Policy

*Currently engaged in* is defined as any use of illegal drugs during the previous twelve months, unless the applicant is currently enrolled in and fully compliant in a supervised drug rehabilitation program approved by the PHA.

- The PHA has reasonable cause to believe that any household member's current use or pattern of use of illegal drugs, or current abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol, may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

#### PHA Policy

In determining reasonable cause, the PHA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of convictions, arrests, or evictions of household members related to the use of illegal drugs or the abuse of alcohol. A conviction will be given more weight than an arrest. A record or records of arrest will not be used as the sole basis for the denial or proof that the applicant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity. The PHA will also consider evidence from treatment providers or community-based organizations providing services to household members.

- Any household member has ever been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for the production or manufacture of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.

#### PHA Policy

If any household member has ever been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for the production or manufacture of methamphetamine in any location, not just federally assisted housing, the family will be denied admission.

- Any household member is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state lifetime sex offender registration program.



### **3-III.C. OTHER PERMITTED REASONS FOR DENIAL OF ADMISSION**

HUD permits, but does not require the PHA to deny admission for the reasons discussed in this section.

#### **Criminal Activity [24 CFR 960.203(c)]**

The PHA is responsible for screening family behavior and suitability for tenancy. In doing so, the PHA may consider an applicant's history of criminal activity involving crimes of physical violence to persons or property and other criminal acts which would adversely affect the health, safety, or welfare of other tenants.

##### PHA Policy

If any household member is currently engaged in, or has engaged in any of the following criminal activities, within the past three years, the family will be denied admission.

*Drug-related criminal activity*, defined by HUD as 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 [24 CFR 5.100].

*Violent criminal activity*, defined by HUD as 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 [24 CFR 5.100].

Criminal activity that may threaten the health, safety, or welfare of other tenants [24 CFR 960.203(c)(3)].

Criminal activity that may threaten the health or safety of PHA staff, contractors, subcontractors, or agents.

Criminal sexual conduct, including but not limited to sexual assault, incest, open and gross lewdness, or child abuse.

Evidence of such criminal activity includes, but is not limited to any record of convictions, arrests, or evictions for suspected drug-related or violent criminal activity of household members within the past three years. A conviction for such activity will be given more weight than an arrest or an eviction. A record or records of arrest will not be used as the sole basis for the denial or proof that the applicant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

In making its decision to deny assistance, the PHA will consider the factors discussed in Sections 3-III.E and 3-III.F. Upon consideration of such factors, the PHA may, on a case-by-case basis, decide not to deny assistance.

### **Previous Behavior [960.203(c) and (d) and PH Occ GB, p. 48]**

HUD authorizes the PHA to deny admission based on relevant information pertaining to the family's previous behavior and suitability for tenancy.

In the event of the receipt of unfavorable information with respect to an applicant, the PHA must consider the time, nature, and extent of the applicant's conduct (including the seriousness of the offense). As discussed in Section 3-III.F, the PHA may also need to consider whether the cause of the unfavorable information may be that the applicant is the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will deny admission to an applicant family if the PHA determines that the family:

- Has a pattern of unsuitable past performance in meeting financial obligations, including rent and utilities within the past three years.

- Has a pattern of disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property, or living or housekeeping habits at prior residences within the past three years which may adversely affect the health, safety, or welfare of other tenants

- Has a pattern of eviction from housing or termination from residential programs within the past three years (considering relevant circumstances)

- Owes rent or other amounts to this or any other PHA or owner in connection with any assisted housing program.

- Misrepresented or does not provide complete information related to eligibility, including income, award of preferences for admission, expenses, family composition or rent.

- Has committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program in the last three years.

- Has engaged in or threatened violent or abusive behavior toward PHA personnel

*Abusive or violent behavior towards PHA personnel* includes verbal as well as physical abuse or violence. Use of racial epithets, or other language, written or oral, that is customarily used to intimidate may be considered abusive or violent behavior.

*Threatening* refers to oral or written threats or physical gestures that communicate intent to abuse or commit violence.

In making its decision to deny admission, the PHA may consider the factors discussed in Sections 3-III.E and 3-III.F. Upon consideration of such factors, the PHA may, on a case-by-case basis, decide not to deny admission.

The PHA may consider the existence of mitigating factors, such as loss of employment or other financial difficulties, before denying admission to an applicant based on the failure to meet prior financial obligations.

### **3-III.D. SCREENING**

#### **Screening for Eligibility**

PHAs are authorized to obtain criminal conviction records from law enforcement agencies to screen applicants for admission to the public housing program. This authority assists the PHA in complying with HUD requirements and PHA policies to deny assistance to applicants who are engaging in or have engaged in certain criminal activities. In order to obtain access to the records the PHA must require every applicant family to submit a consent form signed by each adult household member [24 CFR 5.903].

The PHA may not pass along to the applicant the costs of a criminal records check [24 CFR 960.204(d)].

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will perform criminal background checks through local law enforcement for all adult household members.

If the results of the criminal background check indicate there may have been past criminal activity, but the results are inconclusive, the PHA may request a fingerprint card and may request information from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC).

PHAs are required to perform criminal background checks necessary to determine whether any household member is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender program in the state where the housing is located, as well as in any other state where a household member is known to have resided [24 CFR 960.204(a)(4)].

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will use the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender database to screen applicants for admission.

Additionally, PHAs must ask whether the applicant, or any member of the applicant's household, is subject to a lifetime registered sex offender registration requirement in any state [Notice PIH 2012-28].

If the PHA proposes to deny admission based on a criminal record or on lifetime sex offender registration information, the PHA must notify the household of the proposed action and must provide the subject of the record and the applicant a copy of the record and an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information prior to a denial of admission [24 CFR 5.903(f) and 5.905(d)].

### ***Obtaining Information from Drug Treatment Facilities [24 CFR 960.205]***

HUD authorizes PHAs to request and obtain information from drug abuse treatment facilities concerning applicants. Specifically, the PHA may require each applicant to submit for all household members who are at least 18 years of age, and for each family head, spouse, or cohead regardless of age, one or more consent forms signed by such household members that requests any drug abuse treatment facility to inform the PHA whether the drug abuse treatment facility has reasonable cause to believe that the household member is currently engaging in illegal drug use.

*Drug Abuse Treatment Facility* means an entity that holds itself out as providing, and provides, diagnosis, treatment, or referral for treatment with respect to the illegal drug use and is either an identified unit within a general care facility, or an entity other than a general medical care facility.

*Currently engaging in illegal use of a drug* means illegal use of a drug that occurred recently enough to justify a reasonable belief that there is continuing illegal drug use by a household member.

Any consent form used for the purpose of obtaining information from a drug abuse treatment facility to determine whether a household member is currently engaging in illegal drug use must expire automatically after the PHA has made a final decision to either approve or deny the admission of such person.

Any charges incurred by the PHA for information provided from a drug abuse treatment facility may not be passed on to the applicant or tenant.

If the PHA chooses to obtain such information from drug abuse treatment facilities, it must adopt and implement one of the two following policies:

Policy A: The PHA must submit a request for information to a drug abuse treatment facility for all families before they are admitted. The request must be submitted for each proposed household member who is at least 18 years of age, and for each family head, spouse, or cohead regardless of age.

Policy B: The PHA must submit a request for information only for certain household members, whose criminal record indicates prior arrests or conviction for any criminal activity that may be the sole basis for denial of admission or whose prior tenancy records indicate that the proposed household member engaged in destruction of property or violent activity against another person, or they interfered with the right of peaceful enjoyment of the premises of other residents.

If the PHA chooses to obtain such information, it must abide by the HUD requirements for records management and confidentiality as described in 24 CFR 960.205(f).

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will obtain information from drug abuse treatment facilities to determine whether any applicant family's household members are currently engaging in illegal drug activity only when the PHA has determined that the family will be denied admission based on a family member's drug-related criminal activity, and the family claims that the culpable family member has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program.

### **Screening for Suitability as a Tenant [24 CFR 960.203(c)]**

The PHA is responsible for the screening and selection of families to occupy public housing units. The PHA may consider all relevant information. Screening is important to public housing communities and program integrity, and to ensure that assisted housing is provided to those families that will adhere to lease obligations.

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will consider the family's history with respect to the following factors:

- Payment of rent and utilities

- Caring for a unit and premises

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

- Criminal activity that is a threat to the health, safety, or property of others

- Behavior of all household members as related to the grounds for denial as detailed in Sections 3-III. B and C

- Compliance with any other essential conditions of tenancy

## **Resources Used to Check Applicant Suitability [PH Occ GB, pp. 47-56]**

PHAs have a variety of resources available to them for determination of the suitability of applicants. Generally, PHAs should reject applicants who have recent behavior that would warrant lease termination for a public housing resident.

### PHA Policy

In order to determine the suitability of applicants the PHA will examine applicant history for the past three years. Such background checks will include:

#### *Past Performance in Meeting Financial Obligations, Especially Rent*

PHA and landlord references for the past three years, gathering information about past performance meeting rental obligations such as rent payment record, late payment record, whether the PHA/landlord ever began or completed lease termination for non-payment, and whether utilities were ever disconnected in the unit. PHAs and landlords will be asked if they would rent to the applicant family again.

Utility company references covering the monthly amount of utilities, late payment, disconnection, return of a utility deposit and whether the applicant can get utilities turned on in his/her name. (Use of this inquiry will be reserved for applicants applying for units where there are tenant-paid utilities.)

If an applicant has no rental payment history the PHA will check court records of eviction actions and other financial judgments, and credit reports. A lack of credit history will not disqualify someone from becoming a public housing resident, but a poor credit rating may.

Applicants with no verifiable rental payment history will also be asked to provide the PHA with personal references. The references will be requested to complete a verification of the applicant's ability to pay rent if no other documentation of ability to meet financial obligations is available. The applicant will also be required to complete a checklist documenting their ability to meet financial obligations.

If previous landlords or the utility company do not respond to requests from the PHA, the applicant may provide other documentation that demonstrates their ability to meet financial obligations (e.g. rent receipts, cancelled checks, etc.)

*Disturbances of Neighbors, Destruction of Property or Living or Housekeeping Habits at Prior Residences that May Adversely Affect Health, Safety, or Welfare of Other Tenants, or Cause Damage to the Unit or the Development*

PHA and landlord references for the past three years, gathering information on whether the applicant kept a unit clean, safe and sanitary; whether they violated health or safety codes; whether any damage was done by the applicant to a current or previous unit or the development, and, if so, how much the repair of the damage cost; whether the applicant's housekeeping caused insect or rodent infestation; and whether the neighbors complained about the applicant or whether the police were ever called because of disturbances.

Police and court records within the past three years will be used to check for any evidence of disturbance of neighbors or destruction of property that might have resulted in arrest or conviction. A record of arrest(s) will not be used as the sole basis for the denial or proof that the applicant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

A personal reference will be requested to complete a verification of the applicant's ability to care for the unit and avoid disturbing neighbors if no other documentation is available. In these cases, the applicant will also be required to complete a checklist documenting their ability to care for the unit and to avoid disturbing neighbors.

Home visits may be used to determine the applicant's ability to care for the unit.

### **3-III.E. CRITERIA FOR DECIDING TO DENY ADMISSION**

#### **Evidence**

##### PHA Policy

The PHA will use the preponderance of the evidence as the standard for making all admission decisions.

*Preponderance of the 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.

Preponderance of the evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence.

#### **Consideration of Circumstances [24 CFR 960.203(c)(3) and (d)]**

HUD authorizes the PHA to consider all relevant circumstances when deciding whether to deny admission based on a family's past history except in the situations for which denial of admission is mandated (see Section 3-III.B).

In the event the PHA receives unfavorable information with respect to an applicant, consideration must be given to the time, nature, and extent of the applicant's conduct (including the seriousness of the offense). In a manner consistent with its policies, PHAs may give consideration to factors which might indicate a reasonable probability of favorable future conduct.



## PHA Policy

The PHA may consider the following facts and circumstances prior to making its decision:

- The seriousness of the case, especially with respect to how it would affect other residents' safety or property

- The effects that denial of admission may have on other members of the family who were not involved in the action or failure to act.

- The extent of participation or culpability of individual family members, including whether the culpable family member is a minor or a person with disabilities, or (as discussed further in section 3-III.F) a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking

- The length of time since the violation occurred, including the age of the individual at the time of the conduct, as well as the family's recent history and the likelihood of favorable conduct in the future.

While a record or records of arrest will not be used as the sole basis for denial, an arrest may, however, trigger an investigation to determine whether the applicant actually engaged in disqualifying criminal activity. As part of its investigation, the PHA may obtain the police report associated with the arrest and consider the reported circumstances of the arrest. The PHA may also consider:

- Any statements made by witnesses or the applicant not included in the police report

- Whether criminal charges were filed

- Whether, if filed, criminal charges were abandoned, dismissed, not prosecuted, or ultimately resulted in an acquittal.

- Any other evidence relevant to determining whether or not the applicant engaged in disqualifying activity.

Evidence of criminal conduct will be considered if it indicates a demonstrable risk to safety and/or property.

Evidence of the applicant family's participation in or willingness to participate in social service or other appropriate counseling service programs.

In the case of drug or alcohol abuse, whether the culpable household member is participating in or has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program or has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully.

- The PHA will require the applicant to submit evidence of the household member's current participation in and successful completion of a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program, and evidence of having been rehabilitated successfully.

## **Removal of a Family Member's Name from the Application**

Should the PHA's screening process reveal that an applicant's household includes an individual subject to state lifetime registered sex offender registration, the PHA must offer the family the opportunity to remove the ineligible family member from the household. If the family is unwilling to remove that individual from the household, the PHA must deny admission to the family [Notice PIH 2012-28].

For other criminal activity, the PHA may permit the family to exclude the culpable family members as a condition of eligibility. [24 CFR 960.203(c)(3)(i)].

### PHA Policy

As a condition of receiving assistance, a family may agree to remove the culpable family member from the application. In such instances, the head of household must certify that the family member will not be permitted to visit or to stay as a guest in the public housing unit.

After admission to the program, the family must present evidence of the former family member's current address upon PHA request.

## **Reasonable Accommodation [PH Occ GB, pp. 58-60]**

If the family includes a person with disabilities, the PHA's decision concerning denial of admission is subject to consideration of reasonable accommodation in accordance with 24 CFR Part 8.

### PHA Policy

If the family indicates that the behavior of a family member with a disability is the reason for the proposed denial of admission, in determining whether the behavior is related to the disability the PHA will request written verification from a health professional. If so, upon the family's request, the PHA will determine whether alternative measures are appropriate as a reasonable accommodation. The PHA will only consider accommodations that can reasonably be expected to address the behavior that is the basis of the proposed denial of admission. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of reasonable accommodation.

### **3-III.F. PROHIBITION AGAINST DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, AND STALKING**

The Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) and the HUD regulation at 24 CFR 5.2005(b) prohibit PHAs from denying admission to an otherwise qualified applicant on the basis or as a direct result of the fact that the applicant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking.

Definitions of key terms used in VAWA are provided in section 16-VII of this ACOP, where general VAWA requirements and policies pertaining to notification, documentation, and confidentiality are also located.

#### **Notification**

VAWA 2013 expanded notification requirements to include the obligation for the PHA to provide applicants who are denied assistance with a VAWA Notice of Occupancy Rights and a domestic violence certification form (HUD-5382) at the time the applicant is denied.

##### PHA Policy

The PHA acknowledges that a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking may have an unfavorable history (e.g., a poor credit history, poor rental history, a record of previous damage to an apartment, a prior arrest record) due to adverse factors that would warrant denial under the PHA's policies.

While the PHA is not required to identify whether adverse factors that resulted in the applicant's denial are a result of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the applicant may inform the PHA that their status as a victim is directly related to the grounds for the denial. The PHA will request that the applicant provide enough information to the PHA to allow the PHA to make an objectively reasonable determination based on all circumstances, whether the adverse factor is a direct result of their status as victim.

The PHA will include in its notice of denial information about the protection against denial provided by VAWA in accordance with section 16-VII.C of this ACOP, a notice of VAWA rights, and a copy of the form HUD-5382. The PHA will request in writing that an applicant wishing to claim this protection notify the PHA in writing within 14 business days.

#### **Documentation**

##### ***Victim Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007]***

##### PHA Policy

If an applicant claims the protection against denial of admission that VAWA provides to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, the PHA will request in writing that the applicant provide documentation supporting the claim in accordance with section 16-VII.D of this ACOP.

##### ***Perpetrator Documentation***

### PHA Policy

If the perpetrator of the abuse is a member of the applicant family, the applicant must provide additional documentation consisting of one of the following:

A signed statement (1) requesting that the perpetrator be removed from the application and (2) certifying that the perpetrator will not be permitted to visit or to stay as a guest in the public housing unit.

Documentation that the perpetrator has successfully completed and is successfully undergoing rehabilitation or treatment. The documentation must be signed by an employee or agent of a domestic violence service provider or by a medical or other knowledgeable professional from whom the perpetrator has sought or is receiving assistance in addressing the abuse. The signer must attest under penalty of perjury to his or her belief that the rehabilitation was successfully completed or is progressing successfully. The victim and perpetrator must also sign or attest to the documentation.

### **3-III.G. NOTICE OF ELIGIBILITY OR DENIAL**

The PHA will notify an applicant family of its final determination of eligibility in accordance with the policies in Section 4-III.E.

If a PHA uses a criminal record or sex offender registration information obtained under 24 CFR 5, Subpart J, as the basis of a denial, a copy of the record must precede the notice to deny, with an opportunity for the applicant to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information before the PHA can move to deny the application. In addition, a copy of the record must be provided to the subject of the record [24 CFR 5.903(f) and 5.905(d)].

#### **PHA Policy**

If, based on a criminal record or sex offender registration information an applicant family appears to be ineligible, the PHA will notify the family in writing of the proposed denial and provide a copy of the record to the applicant and to the subject of the record. The family will be given 10 business days to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information. If the family does not contact the PHA to dispute the information within that 10 day period, the PHA will proceed with issuing the notice of denial of admission. A family that does not exercise their right to dispute the accuracy of the information prior to issuance of the official denial letter will still be given the opportunity to do so as part of the informal hearing process.

Notice requirements related to denying admission to noncitizens are contained in Section 3-II.B.

Notice policies related to denying admission to applicants who may be victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking are contained in Section 3-III.F.

## EXHIBIT 3-1: DETAILED DEFINITIONS RELATED TO DISABILITIES

### Person with Disabilities [24 CFR 5.403]

The term *person with disabilities* means a person who has any of the following types of conditions.

- Has a disability, as defined in 42 U.S.C. Section 423(d)(1)(A), which reads:

Inability to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to result in death or which has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months

In the case of an individual who has attained the age of 55 and is blind (within the meaning of “blindness” as defined in section 416(i)(1) of this title), inability by reason of such blindness to engage in substantial gainful activity, requiring skills or ability comparable to those of any gainful activity in which he has previously engaged with some regularity and over a substantial period of time.
- Has a developmental disability as defined in the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 [42 U.S.C.15002(8)], which defines developmental disability in functional terms as follows:

(A) IN GENERAL – The term *developmental disability* means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that-

  - (i) is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;
  - (ii) is manifested before the individual attains age 22;
  - (iii) is likely to continue indefinitely;
  - (iv) results in substantial functional limitations in 3 or more of the following areas of major life activity: (I) self-care, (II) receptive and expressive language, (III) learning, (IV) mobility, (V) self-direction, (VI) capacity for independent living, (VII) economic self-sufficiency; and
  - (v) reflects the individual’s need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

(B) INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN – An individual from birth to age 9, inclusive, who has a substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired condition, may be considered to have a developmental disability without meeting 3 or more of the criteria described in clauses (i) through (v) of subparagraph (A) if the individual, without services and supports, has a high probability of meeting those criteria later in life.
- Has a physical, mental, or emotional impairment that is expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration; substantially impedes his or her ability to live independently, and is of such a nature that the ability to live independently could be improved by more suitable housing conditions.

People with the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) or any conditions arising from the etiologic agent for AIDS are not excluded from this definition.

A person whose disability is based solely on any drug or alcohol dependence does not qualify as a person with disabilities for the purposes of this program.

For purposes of reasonable accommodation and program accessibility for persons with disabilities, the term person with disabilities refers to an individual with handicaps.

### **Individual with Handicaps [24 CFR 8.3]**

*Individual with handicaps* means any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment. The term does not include any individual who is an alcoholic or drug abuser whose current use of alcohol or drugs prevents the individual from participating in the program or activity in question, or whose participation, by reason of such current alcohol or drug abuse, would constitute a direct threat to property or the safety of others. As used in this definition, the pCDase:

(1) Physical or mental impairment includes:

- (a) Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genito-urinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine.
- (b) Any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities. The term physical or mental impairment includes, but is not limited to, such diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental retardation, emotional illness, drug addiction and alcoholism.

(2) Major life activities means functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.

(3) Has a record of such an impairment means has a history of, or has been misclassified as having, a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

(4) Is regarded as having an impairment means:

- (a) Has a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit one or more major life activities but that is treated by a recipient as constituting such a limitation.
- (b) Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities only as a result of the attitudes of others toward such impairment.
- (c) Has none of the impairments defined in paragraph (a) of this section but is treated by a recipient as having such an impairment.

## Chapter 4

### APPLICATIONS, WAITING LIST AND TENANT SELECTION

#### INTRODUCTION

When a family wishes to reside in public housing, the family must submit an application that provides the PHA with the information needed to determine the family's eligibility. HUD requires the PHA to place all eligible families that apply for public housing on a waiting list. When a unit becomes available, the PHA must select families from the waiting list in accordance with HUD requirements and PHA policies as stated in its Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP) and its annual plan.

The PHA is required to adopt a clear approach to accepting applications, placing families on the waiting list, and selecting families from the waiting list, and must follow this approach consistently. The actual order in which families are selected from the waiting list can be affected if a family has certain characteristics designated by HUD or the PHA to receive preferential treatment.

HUD regulations require that the PHA comply with all equal opportunity requirements and it must affirmatively further fair housing goals in the administration of the program [24 CFR 960.103, PH Occ GB p. 13]. Adherence to the selection policies described in this chapter ensures that the PHA will be in compliance with all relevant fair housing requirements, as described in Chapter 2.

This chapter describes HUD and PHA policies for accepting applications, managing the waiting list and selecting families from the waiting list. The PHA's policies for assigning unit size and making unit offers are contained in Chapter 5. Together, Chapters 4 and 5 of the ACOP comprise the PHA's Tenant Selection and Assignment Plan (TSAP).

The policies outlined in this chapter are organized into three sections, as follows:

Part I: The Application Process. This part provides an overview of the application process, and discusses how applicants can obtain and submit applications. It also specifies how the PHA will handle the applications it receives.

Part II: Managing the Waiting List. This part presents the policies that govern how the PHA's waiting list is structured, when it is opened and closed, and how the public is notified of the opportunity to apply for public housing. It also discusses the process the PHA will use to keep the waiting list current.

Part III: Tenant Selection. This part describes the policies that guide the PHA in selecting families from the waiting list as units become available. It also specifies how in-person interviews will be used to ensure that the PHA has the information needed to make a final eligibility determination.





## **PART I: THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **4-I.A. OVERVIEW**

This part describes the policies that guide the PHA's efforts to distribute and accept applications, and to make preliminary determinations of applicant family eligibility that affect placement of the family on the waiting list. This part also describes the PHA's obligation to ensure the accessibility of the application process.

### **4-I.B. APPLYING FOR ASSISTANCE**

Any family that wishes to reside in public housing must apply for admission to the program [24 CFR 1.4(b)(2)(ii), 24 CFR 960.202(a)(2)(iv), and PH Occ GB, p. 68]. HUD permits the PHA to determine the format and content of its applications, as well how such applications will be made available to interested families and how applications will be accepted by the PHA. However, the PHA must include Form HUD-92006, Supplement to Application for Federally Assisted Housing, as part of the PHA's application [Notice PIH 2009-36].

#### PHA Policy

Depending upon the length of time between the date of application and the availability of housing, the PHA may use a one- or two-step application process.

A one-step process will be used when it is expected that a family will be selected from the waiting list within 60 days of the date of application. At application, the family must provide all of the information necessary to establish family eligibility and the amount of rent the family will pay.

A two-step process will be used when it is expected that a family will not be selected from the waiting list for at least 60 days from the date of application. Under the two-step application process, the PHA initially will require families to provide only the information needed to make an initial assessment of the family's eligibility, and to determine the family's placement on the waiting list. The family will be required to provide all of the information necessary to establish family eligibility and the amount of rent the family will pay when selected from the waiting list.

When the waiting list has been opened for applications families may obtain application forms from the PHA's office during normal business hours or (2) request – by telephone or by mail – that an application form be sent to the family via first class mail. The PHA may also take applications through an internet-only application process. The PHA may limit the number of applications to be placed on the waiting list through a lottery system.

Completed applications must be returned to the PHA by mail, by fax, or submitted in person during normal business hours. Applications taken through an internet-only application do not require the tenant to complete a hard copy. Applications must be filled out completely in order to be accepted by the PHA for processing. If an application is incomplete, the PHA will notify the family of the additional information required. Applicants who are placed on the Minneapolis PHA's waiting list must contact the Minneapolis PHA and follow their procedure.

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

#### **4-I.C. ACCESSIBILITY OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

The PHA must take a variety of steps to ensure that the application process is accessible to those people who might have difficulty complying with the standard PHA application process.

##### **Disabled Populations [24 CFR 8; PH Occ GB, p. 68]**

The PHA must provide reasonable accommodation as needed for persons with disabilities to make the application process fully accessible. The facility where applications are accepted and the application process must be fully accessible, or the PHA must provide an alternate approach that provides equal access to the program. Chapter 2 provides a full discussion of the PHA's policies related to providing reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities.

##### **Limited English Proficiency**

PHAs are required to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency [24 CFR 1]. Chapter 2 provides a full discussion on the PHA's policies related to ensuring access to people with limited English proficiency (LEP).

#### **4-I.D. PLACEMENT ON THE WAITING LIST**

The PHA must review each completed application received and make a preliminary assessment of the family's eligibility. Applicants for whom the waiting list is open must be placed on the waiting list unless the PHA determines the family to be ineligible. Where the family is determined to be ineligible, the PHA must notify the family in writing [24 CFR 960.208(a); PH Occ GB, p. 41].

No applicant has a right or entitlement to be listed on the waiting list, or to any particular position on the waiting list.

##### **Ineligible for Placement on the Waiting List**

###### PHA Policy

If the PHA determines from the information provided that a family is ineligible, the family will not be placed on the waiting list. When a family is determined to be ineligible, the PHA will send written notification of the ineligibility determination within 30 business days or as promptly as possible, but no later than 30 business days of receipt of the completed application. The notice will specify the reasons for ineligibility, and will inform the family of its right to request an informal hearing and explain the process for doing so (see Chapter 14).

##### **Eligible for Placement on the Waiting List**

###### PHA Policy

The PHA will send written notification of the preliminary eligibility determination within 30 business days or as promptly as possible, but no later than 30 business days of receiving a completed application. If applicable, the notice will also indicate the waiting list preference(s) for which the family appears to qualify.

Applicants will be placed on the waiting list according to PHA preference(s), bedroom size and random lottery determined position.

The PHA will assign families on the waiting list according to the bedroom size for which a family qualifies as established in its occupancy standards (see Chapter 5). Families may request to be placed on the waiting list for a unit size smaller than designated by the occupancy guidelines (as long as the unit is not overcrowded according to PHA standards and local codes). However, in these cases, the family must agree not to request a transfer for two years after admission, unless they have a change in family size or composition.

Placement on the waiting list does not indicate that the family is, in fact, eligible for admission. When the family is selected from the waiting list, the PHA will verify any preference(s) claimed and determine eligibility and suitability for admission to the program.



## **PART II: MANAGING THE WAITING LIST**

### **4-II.A. OVERVIEW**

The PHA must have policies regarding the type of waiting list it will utilize as well as how the waiting list will be organized and managed. This includes policies on notifying the public on the opening and closing of the waiting list to new applicants, updating family information, purging the list of families that are no longer interested in or eligible for public housing, and conducting outreach to ensure a sufficient number of applicants.

In addition, HUD imposes requirements on how the PHA may structure its waiting list and how families must be treated if they apply for public housing at a PHA that administers more than one assisted housing program.

### **4-II.B. ORGANIZATION OF THE WAITING LIST**

The PHA's public housing waiting list must be organized in such a manner to allow the PHA to accurately identify and select families in the proper order, according to the admissions policies described in this ACOP.

#### PHA Policy

The waiting list will contain the following information for each applicant listed:

- Names, social security numbers and birthdates of all household members.

- Unit size required (number of family members)

- Amount and source of annual income

- Accessibility requirement, if any/Reasonable Accommodation request

- Application number

- Household type (family, elderly, disabled)

- Admission preference, if any

- Race and ethnicity of all household members

- Street Address and phone numbers

- Mailing address (if PO Box or other permanent address)

- Convictions

- Previous address

- Name and address of current and previous landlords

- Emergency contact person, address and phone number

- Previous participation in HUD programs

The PHA may adopt one community-wide waiting list or site-based waiting lists. The PHA must obtain approval from HUD through submission of its Annual Plan before it may offer site-based waiting lists. Site-based waiting lists allow families to select the development where they wish to reside and must be consistent with all applicable civil rights and fair housing laws and regulations [24 CFR 903.7(b)(2)].

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will maintain one single community-wide waiting list for its developments. Within the list, the PHA will designate subparts to easily identify who should be offered the next available unit (i.e. unit size, and accessible units).

The PHA will not adopt site-based waiting lists.

HUD requires that public housing applicants must be offered the opportunity to be placed on the waiting list for any tenant-based or project-based voucher or moderate rehabilitation program that the PHA operates if 1) the other programs' waiting lists are open, and 2) the family is qualified for the other programs [24 CFR 982.205(a)(2)(i)].

HUD permits, but does not require, that PHAs maintain a single merged waiting list for their public housing, Section 8, and other subsidized housing programs [24 CFR 982.205(a)(1)].

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will not merge the public housing waiting list with the waiting list for any other program the PHA operates.

Applicants from Minneapolis PHA public housing waiting list will be notified of openings as they occur and will be considered in conjunction with Washington County CDA applicants.



#### **4-II.C. OPENING AND CLOSING THE WAITING LIST**

##### **Closing the Waiting List**

The PHA is permitted to close the waiting list, in whole or in part, if it has an adequate pool of families to fully lease units in all of its developments. The PHA may close the waiting list completely, or restrict intake by preference, type of project, or by size and type of dwelling unit. [PH Occ GB, p. 31].

##### PHA Policy

The PHA will close the waiting list when the estimated waiting period for housing applicants on the list reaches 24 months for the most current applicants. Where the PHA has particular preferences or other criteria that require a specific category of family, the PHA may elect to continue to accept applications from these applicants while closing the waiting list to others.

##### **Reopening the Waiting List**

If the waiting list has been closed, it may be reopened at any time. The PHA should publish a notice announcing the opening of the waiting list in local newspapers of general circulation, minority media, and other suitable media outlets. Such notice must comply with HUD fair housing requirements. The PHA should specify who may apply, and where and when applications will be received.

##### PHA Policy

The PHA will announce the reopening of the waiting list at least 10 business days prior to the date applications will first be accepted. If the list is only being reopened for certain categories of families, this information will be contained in the notice. The notice will specify where, when, and how applications are to be received.

The PHA will give public notice by publishing the relevant information in suitable media outlets including, but not limited to:

***Housing Link.org, Oakdale/Lake Elmo Review, Forest Lake Times, Stillwater Gazette, MN Spokesman Recorder, Women's Press, and Access Press.***

***A press announcement will be sent to all area PHAs, Washington County Community Services, Local food shelves and Heading Home Washington. A public announcement will be listed on Washington County CDA's web site.***

#### **4-II.D. FAMILY OUTREACH [24 CFR 903.2(d); 24 CFR 903.7(a) and (b)]**

The PHA should conduct outreach as necessary to ensure that the PHA has a sufficient number of applicants on the waiting list to fill anticipated vacancies and to assure that the PHA is affirmatively furthering fair housing and complying with the Fair Housing Act.

Because HUD requires the PHA to admit a specified percentage of extremely low income families, the PHA may need to conduct special outreach to ensure that an adequate number of such families apply for public housing.

PHA outreach efforts must comply with fair housing requirements. This includes:

- Analyzing the housing market area and the populations currently being served to identify underserved populations
- Ensuring that outreach efforts are targeted to media outlets that reach eligible populations that are underrepresented in the program
- Avoiding outreach efforts that prefer or exclude people who are members of a protected class

PHA outreach efforts must be designed to inform qualified families about the availability of units under the program. These efforts may include, as needed, any of the following activities:

- Submitting press releases to local newspapers, including minority newspapers
- Developing informational materials and flyers to distribute to other agencies
- Providing application forms to other public and private agencies that serve the low income population
- Developing partnerships with other organizations that serve similar populations, including agencies that provide services for persons with disabilities

##### PHA Policy

The PHA will monitor the characteristics of the population being served and the characteristics of the population as a whole in the PHA's jurisdiction. Targeted outreach efforts will be undertaken if a comparison suggests that certain populations are being underserved.

#### **4-II.E. REPORTING CHANGES IN FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES**

##### **PHA Policy**

While the family is on the waiting list, the family must inform the PHA, within 10 business days, of changes in family size or composition, preference status, or contact information, including current residence, mailing address, and phone number. The changes must be submitted in writing.

Changes in an applicant's circumstances while on the waiting list may affect the family's qualification for a particular bedroom size or entitlement to a preference. When an applicant reports a change that affects their placement on the waiting list, the waiting list will be updated accordingly.

#### **4-II.F. UPDATING THE WAITING LIST**

HUD requires the PHA to establish policies that describe the circumstances under which applicants will be removed from the waiting list [24 CFR 960.202(a)(2)(iv)].

##### **Purging the Waiting List**

The decision to remove an applicant family that includes a person with disabilities from the waiting list is subject to reasonable accommodation. If the applicant did not respond to the PHA's request for information or updates because of the family member's disability, the PHA must, upon the family's request, reinstate the applicant family to their former position on the waiting list as a reasonable accommodation [24 CFR 8.4(a), 24 CFR 100.204(a), and PH Occ GB, p. 39 and 40]. See Chapter 2 for further information regarding reasonable accommodations.

##### PHA Policy

The waiting list will be updated as needed to ensure that all applicant information is current and timely. At minimum the waiting list update letter will be sent out every other year.

To update the waiting list, the PHA will send an update request via first class mail to each family on the waiting list to determine whether the family continues to be interested in, and to qualify for, the program. This update request will be sent to the last address that the PHA has on record for the family. The update request will provide a deadline by which the family must respond and will state that failure to respond will result in the applicant's name being removed from the waiting list.

The family's response must be in writing and may be delivered in person, by mail, or by fax. Responses should be postmarked or received by the PHA not later than 10 business days from the date of the PHA letter.

If the family fails to respond within 10 business days, the family will be removed from the waiting list without further notice.

If the notice is returned by the post office with no forwarding address, the applicant will be removed from the waiting list without further notice.

If the notice is returned by the post office with a forwarding address, the notice will be re-sent to the address indicated. The family will have 10 business days to respond from the date the letter was re-sent. If the family fails to respond within this time frame, the family will be removed from the waiting list without further notice.

When a family is removed from the waiting list during the update process for failure to respond, no informal hearing will be offered. Such failures to act on the part of the applicant prevent the PHA from making an eligibility determination; therefore no informal hearing is required.

If a family is removed from the waiting list for failure to respond, the PHA may reinstate the family if the lack of response was due to PHA error, or to circumstances beyond the family's control.

If the waiting list is maintained on-line, it is the applicants responsibility to update the address and family information.

## **Removal from the Waiting List**

### PHA Policy

The PHA will remove an applicant from the waiting list upon written request by the applicant family. In such cases no informal hearing is required.

If the PHA determines that the family is not eligible for admission (see Chapter 3) at any time while the family is on the waiting list the family will be removed from the waiting list.

If a family is removed from the waiting list because the PHA has determined the family is not eligible for admission, a notice will be sent to the family's address of record as well as to any alternate address provided on the initial application. The notice will state the reasons the family was removed from the waiting list and will inform the family how to request an informal hearing regarding the PHA's decision (see Chapter 14) [24 CFR 960.208(a)].



## **PART III: TENANT SELECTION**

### **4-III.A. OVERVIEW**

The PHA must establish tenant selection policies for families being admitted to public housing [24 CFR 960.201(a)]. The PHA must not require any specific income or racial quotas for any developments [24 CFR 903.2(d)]. The PHA must not assign persons to a particular section of a community or to a development or building based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status or national origin for purposes of segregating populations [24 CFR 1.4(b)(1)(iii) and 24 CFR 903.2(d)(1)].

The order in which families will be selected from the waiting list depends on the selection method chosen by the PHA and is impacted in part by any selection preferences that the family qualifies for. The availability of units also may affect the order in which families are selected from the waiting list.

The PHA must maintain a clear record of all information required to verify that the family is selected from the waiting list according to the PHA's selection policies [24 CFR 960.206(e)(2)]. The PHA's policies must be posted any place where the PHA receives applications. The PHA must provide a copy of its tenant selection policies upon request to any applicant or tenant. The PHA may charge the family for providing a copy of its tenant selection policies [24 CFR 960.202(c)(2)].

#### **PHA Policy**

When an applicant or resident family requests a copy of the PHA's tenant selection policies, the PHA will provide copies to them free of charge.

#### **4-III.B. SELECTION METHOD**

PHAs must describe the method for selecting applicant families from the waiting list, including the system of admission preferences that the PHA will use.

##### **Local Preferences [24 CFR 960.206]**

PHAs are permitted to establish local preferences and to give priority to serving families that meet those criteria. HUD specifically authorizes and places restrictions on certain types of local preferences. HUD also permits the PHA to establish other local preferences, at its discretion. Any local preferences established must be consistent with the PHA plan and the consolidated plan, and must be based on local housing needs and priorities that can be documented by generally accepted data sources [24 CFR 960.206(a)].

##### PHA Policy

Local preferences will be used to select among applicants on the waiting list. Public notice with the opportunity for public comment will be held before the PHA adopts any local preference.

The hearing will be publicized using the same guidelines as those for opening and closing the waiting list. The PHA uses the following Local Preferences in the following order:

1. Whispering Pines units have a preference for elderly, handicapped or disabled.
2. Displacement Preference: For applicants (a) displaced as a direct result of rehabilitation, demolition or acquisition due to federal, state, or local government action in Washington County, or (b) whose dwelling has been extensively damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster in Washington County declared or otherwise formally recognized pursuant to federal disaster relief laws, such as fire, flood, or tornado.

##### Selection Process

All applicants who qualify for the Displacement Preference will be offered housing before applicants on the waiting list. The Lottery determined position will be utilized to determine the sequence within the above described preferences.

Households who qualify for the above preferences must also satisfy the applicant requirements, income requirements, and screening criteria described elsewhere in the ACOP. Households who qualify for the Residency Preference must verify residency or employment in the county including but not limited to a Minnesota Driver's license or Minnesota State Identification card, a current lease, letter from parents, proof of employment or have been notified that they have been hired to work, etc. For the Displacement Preference households must provide written verification that may include documentation from the displacing agency, proof of residency in disaster declared areas or other documentation acceptable to the management company.

Use of the Residency Preference will not have the purpose or effect of delaying or otherwise denying admission to the program based on race, color, ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability or age of any member of the applicant family.



Any admission mandated by court order related to desegregation or Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity will take precedence over the preference system. Other admissions required by court order will also take precedence over the preference system.

### **Income Targeting Requirement [24 CFR 960.202(b)]**

HUD requires that extremely low-income (ELI) families make up at least 40% of the families admitted to public housing during the PHA's fiscal year. ELI families are those with annual incomes at or below the federal poverty level or 30% of the area median income, whichever is number is higher [*Federal Register* notice 6/25/14]. To ensure this requirement is met, the PHA may skip non-ELI families on the waiting list in order to select an ELI family.

If a PHA also operates a housing choice voucher (HCV) program, admissions of extremely low-income families to the PHA's HCV program during a PHA fiscal year that exceed the 75% minimum target requirement for the voucher program, shall be credited against the PHA's basic targeting requirement in the public housing program for the same fiscal year. However, under these circumstances the fiscal year credit to the public housing program must not exceed the lower of: (1) ten percent of public housing waiting list admissions during the PHA fiscal year; (2) ten percent of waiting list admissions to the PHA's housing choice voucher program during the PHA fiscal year; or (3) the number of qualifying low-income families who commence occupancy during the fiscal year of PHA public housing units located in census tracts with a poverty rate of 30 percent or more. For this purpose, qualifying low-income family means a low-income family other than an extremely low-income family.

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will monitor progress in meeting the ELI requirement throughout the fiscal year. ELI families will be selected ahead of other eligible families on the waiting list on an as-needed basis to ensure that the income targeting requirement is met.

### **Mixed Population Developments [24 CFR 960.407]**

A mixed population development is a public housing development or portion of a development that was reserved for elderly families and disabled families at its inception (and has retained that character) or the PHA at some point after its inception obtained HUD approval to give preference in tenant selection for all units in the development (or portion of a development) to elderly and disabled families [24 CFR 960.102]. Elderly family means a family whose head, spouse, cohead, or sole member is a person who is at least 62 years of age. Disabled family means a family whose head, spouse, cohead, or sole member is a person with disabilities [24 CFR 5.403]. The PHA must give elderly and disabled families equal preference in selecting these families for admission to mixed population developments. The PHA may not establish a limit on the number of elderly or disabled families that may occupy a mixed population development. In selecting elderly and disabled families to fill these units, the PHA must first offer the units that have accessibility features for families that include a person with a disability and require the accessibility features of such units. The PHA may not discriminate against elderly or disabled families that include children (Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988).

### **Units Designated for Elderly or Disabled Families [24 CFR 945]**

The PHA may designate projects or portions of a public housing project specifically for elderly or disabled families. The PHA must have a HUD-approved allocation plan before the designation may take place.

Among the designated developments, the PHA must also apply any preferences that it has established. If there are not enough elderly families to occupy the units in a designated elderly development, the PHA may allow near-elderly families to occupy the units [24 CFR 945.303(c)(1)]. Near-elderly family means a family whose head, spouse, or cohead is at least 50 years old, but is less than 62 [24 CFR 5.403].

If there are an insufficient number of elderly families and near-elderly families for the units in a development designated for elderly families, the PHA must make available to all other families any unit that is ready for re-rental and has been vacant for more than 60 consecutive days [24 CFR 945.303(c)(2)].

The decision of any disabled family or elderly family not to occupy or accept occupancy in designated housing shall not have an adverse affect on their admission or continued occupancy in public housing or their position on or placement on the waiting list. However, this protection does not apply to any family who refuses to occupy or accept occupancy in designated housing because of the race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or national origin of the occupants of the designated housing or the surrounding area [24 CFR 945.303(d)(1) and (2)].

This protection does apply to an elderly family or disabled family that declines to accept occupancy, respectively, in a designated project for elderly families or for disabled families, and requests occupancy in a general occupancy project or in a mixed population project [24 CFR 945.303(d)(3)].

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA does not have designated elderly or designated disabled housing at this time.

## **Deconcentration of Poverty and Income-Mixing [24 CFR 903.1 and 903.2]**

The PHA's admission policy must be designed to provide for deconcentration of poverty and income-mixing by bringing higher income tenants into lower income projects and lower income tenants into higher income projects. A statement of the PHA's deconcentration policies must be included in its annual plan [24 CFR 903.7(b)].

The PHA's deconcentration policy must comply with its obligation to meet the income targeting requirement [24 CFR 903.2(c)(5)].

Developments subject to the deconcentration requirement are referred to as 'covered developments' and include general occupancy (family) public housing developments. The following developments are not subject to deconcentration and income mixing requirements: developments operated by a PHA with fewer than 100 public housing units; mixed population or developments designated specifically for elderly or disabled families; developments operated by a PHA with only one general occupancy development; developments approved for demolition or for conversion to tenant-based public housing; and developments approved for a mixed-finance plan using HOPE VI or public housing funds [24 CFR 903.2(b)].

### ***Steps for Implementation [24 CFR 903.2(c)(1)]***

To implement the statutory requirement to deconcentrate poverty and provide for income mixing in covered developments, the PHA must comply with the following steps:

Step 1. The PHA must determine the average income of all families residing in all the PHA's covered developments. The PHA may use the median income, instead of average income, provided that the PHA includes a written explanation in its annual plan justifying the use of median income.

#### **PHA Policy**

If necessary, the PHA will determine the average income of all families in all covered developments on an annual basis.

Step 2. The PHA must determine the average income (or median income, if median income was used in Step 1) of all families residing in each covered development. In determining average income for each development, the PHA has the option of adjusting its income analysis for unit size in accordance with procedures prescribed by HUD.

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will determine the average income of all families residing in each covered development (not adjusting for unit size) on an annual basis.

Step 3. The PHA must then determine whether each of its covered developments falls above, within, or below the established income range (EIR), which is from 85% to 115% of the average family income determined in Step 1. However, the upper limit must never be less than the income at which a family would be defined as an extremely low-income family (federal poverty level or 30 percent of median income, whichever number is higher).

Step 4. The PHA with covered developments having average incomes outside the EIR must then determine whether or not these developments are consistent with its local goals and annual plan.

Step 5. Where the income profile for a covered development is not explained or justified in the annual plan submission, the PHA must include in its admission policy its specific policy to provide for deconcentration of poverty and income mixing.

Depending on local circumstances the PHA's deconcentration policy may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Providing incentives to encourage families to accept units in developments where their income level is needed, including rent incentives, affirmative marketing plans, or added amenities
- Targeting investment and capital improvements toward developments with an average income below the EIR to encourage families with incomes above the EIR to accept units in those developments
- Establishing a preference for admission of working families in developments below the EIR
- Skipping a family on the waiting list to reach another family in an effort to further the goals of deconcentration
- Providing other strategies permitted by statute and determined by the PHA in consultation with the residents and the community through the annual plan process to be responsive to local needs and PHA strategic objectives

A family has the sole discretion whether to accept an offer of a unit made under the PHA's deconcentration policy. The PHA must not take any adverse action toward any eligible family for choosing not to accept an offer of a unit under the PHA's deconcentration policy [24 CFR 903.2(c)(4)].

If, at annual review, the average incomes at all general occupancy developments are within the EIR, the PHA will be considered to be in compliance with the deconcentration requirement and no further action is required.

#### PHA Policy

For developments outside the EIR the PHA will take the following actions to provide for deconcentration of poverty and income mixing:

- 1) Skipping a family on the waiting list to reach another family in an effort to further the goals of de-concentration.
- 2) Establishing a preference for admission of working families in developments below the EIR Order of Selection [24 CFR 960.206(e)]

The PHA system of preferences may select families either according to the date and time of application or by a random selection process.

#### PHA Policy

Families will be selected from the waiting list based on preference. Among applicants with the same preference, families will be selected based on a random lottery determined position. When selecting applicants from the waiting list, the PHA will match the

characteristics of the available unit (unit size, accessibility features, unit type) to the applicants on the waiting lists. The PHA will offer the unit to the highest ranking applicant who qualifies for that unit size or type, or that requires the accessibility features.

By matching unit and family characteristics, it is possible that families who are lower on the waiting list may receive an offer of housing ahead of families with a lower lottery determined position or higher preference status.

Factors such as deconcentration or income mixing and income targeting will also be considered in accordance with HUD requirements and PHA policy and may result in different placement of applicants.

#### **4-III.C. NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION**

When the family has been selected from the waiting list, the PHA must notify the family and provide clear information about what the family must do to continue the applicant process [24 CFR 960.208]. .

##### PHA Policy

The PHA will notify the family by first class mail and phone if available when it is selected from the waiting list.

The notice will inform the family of the following:

- Date, time, and location of the scheduled application interview, including any procedures for rescheduling the interview

- Who is required to attend the interview

- Documents that must be provided at the interview to document the legal identity of household members, including information about what constitutes acceptable documentation

- Documents that must be provided at the interview to document eligibility for a preference, if applicable

- Other documents and information that should be brought to the interview

If a notification letter is returned to the PHA with no forwarding address, the family will be removed from the waiting list without further notice. Such failure to act on the part of the applicant prevents the PHA from making an eligibility determination; therefore no informal hearing will be offered.

#### **4-III.D. THE APPLICATION INTERVIEW**

HUD recommends that the PHA obtain the information and documentation needed to make an eligibility determination through a private interview. Being invited to attend an interview does not constitute admission to the program.

Assistance cannot be provided to the family until all SSN documentation requirements are met. However, if the PHA determines that an applicant family is otherwise eligible to participate in the program, the family may retain its place on the waiting list for a period of time determined by the PHA [Notice PIH 2012-10].

Reasonable accommodation must be made for persons with disabilities who are unable to attend an interview due to their disability [24 CFR 8.4(a) and 24 CFR 100.204(a)].

##### PHA Policy

Families selected from the waiting list are required to participate in an eligibility interview.

The head of household and the spouse/cohead will be strongly encouraged to attend the interview together. However, either the head of household or the spouse/cohead may attend the interview on behalf of the family. Verification of information pertaining to adult members of the household not present at the interview will not begin until signed release forms are returned to the PHA.

The interview will be conducted only if the head of household or spouse/cohead provides appropriate documentation of legal identity (Chapter 7 provides a discussion of proper documentation of legal identity). If the family representative does not provide the required documentation, the appointment may be rescheduled when the proper documents have been obtained.

Pending disclosure and documentation of social security numbers (SSN), the PHA will allow the family to retain its place on the waiting list for 10 business days. If not all household members have disclosed their SSNs at the next time a unit becomes available the PHA will offer a unit to the next eligible applicant family on the waiting list.

If the family is claiming a waiting list preference, the family must provide documentation to verify their eligibility for a preference (see Chapter 7). If the family is verified as eligible for the preference, the PHA will proceed with the interview. If the PHA determines the family is not eligible for the preference, the interview will not proceed and the family will be placed back on the waiting list according to the lottery determined position

The family must provide the information necessary to establish the family's eligibility, including suitability, and to determine the appropriate amount of rent the family will pay. The family must also complete required forms, provide required signatures, and submit required documentation. If any materials are missing, the PHA will provide the family with a written list of items that must be submitted.

Any required documents or information that the family is unable to provide at the interview must be provided within 10 business days of the interview (Chapter 7 provides details about longer submission deadlines for particular items, including documentation of Social Security numbers and eligible noncitizen status). If the family is unable to obtain the information or materials within the required time frame, the family must request an extension in writing. If the required documents and information are not provided within the required time frame (plus any extensions), the family will be sent a notice of denial (see Chapter 3).

An advocate, interpreter, or other assistant may assist the family with the application and the interview process.

Interviews will be conducted in English. For limited English proficient (LEP) applicants, the PHA will provide translation services in accordance with the PHA's LEP plan.

If the family is unable to attend a scheduled interview, the family should contact the PHA in advance of the interview to schedule a new appointment. In all circumstances, if a family does not attend a scheduled interview, the PHA will send another notification letter with a new interview appointment time. Applicants who fail to attend two scheduled interviews without PHA approval will have their applications removed from the waiting list based on the family's failure to supply information needed to determine eligibility. The second appointment letter will state that failure to appear for the appointment without a request to reschedule will be interpreted to mean that the family is no longer interested and their application will be removed from the waiting list. Such failure to act on the part of the applicant prevents the PHA from making an eligibility determination, therefore the PHA will not offer an informal hearing.



#### **4-III.E. FINAL ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION [24 CFR 960.208]**

The PHA must verify all information provided by the family (see Chapter 7). Based on verified information related to the eligibility requirements, including PHA suitability standards, the PHA must make a final determination of eligibility (see Chapter 3).

When a determination is made that a family is eligible and satisfies all requirements for admission, including tenant selection criteria, the applicant must be notified of the approximate date of occupancy insofar as that date can be reasonably determined [24 CFR 960.208(b)].

##### PHA Policy

The PHA will notify a family in writing of their eligibility within 10 business days of the determination and will provide the approximate date of occupancy in so far as that date can be reasonably determined.

The PHA will expedite the administrative process for determining eligibility to the extent possible for applicants who are admitted to the public housing program as a result of an emergency transfer from another of the CDA's program.

The PHA must promptly notify any family determined to be ineligible for admission of the basis for such determination, and must provide the applicant upon request, within a reasonable time after the determination is made, with an opportunity for an informal hearing on such determination [24 CFR 960.208(a)].

##### PHA Policy

If the PHA determines that the family is ineligible, the PHA will send written notification of the ineligibility determination within 10 business days of the determination. The notice will specify the reasons for ineligibility, and will inform the family of its right to request an informal hearing (see Chapter 14).

If the PHA uses a criminal record or sex offender registration information obtained under 24 CFR 5, Subpart J, as the basis of a denial, a copy of the record must precede the notice to deny, with an opportunity for the applicant to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information before the PHA can move to deny the application. See Section 3-III.G for the PHA's policy regarding such circumstances.

The PHA must provide the family a notice of VAWA rights (form HUD 5380 Notice of Occupancy Rights) as well as the HUD VAWA self-certification form (form HUD 5382) in accordance with the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, and as outlined in 16-VII.C, at the time the applicant is provided assistance or at the time the applicant is denied assistance. This notice must be provided in both of the following instances: (1) when a family actually begins receiving assistance (lease execution); or (2) when a family is notified of it ineligibility.

## **Chapter 5**

### **OCCUPANCY STANDARDS AND UNIT OFFERS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The PHA must establish policies governing occupancy of dwelling units and offering dwelling units to qualified families.

This chapter contains policies for assigning unit size and making unit offers. The PHA's waiting list and selection policies are contained in Chapter 4. Together, Chapters 4 and 5 of the ACOP comprise the PHA's Tenant Selection and Assignment Plan (TSAP).

Policies in this chapter are organized in two parts.

Part I: Occupancy Standards. This part contains the PHA's standards for determining the appropriate unit size for families of different sizes, compositions, and types.

Part II: Unit Offers. This part contains the PHA's policies for making unit offers, and describes actions to be taken when unit offers are refused.

#### **PART I: OCCUPANCY STANDARDS**

##### **5-I.A. OVERVIEW**

Occupancy standards are established by the PHA to ensure that units are occupied by families of the appropriate size. This policy maintains the maximum usefulness of the units, while preserving them from underutilization or from excessive wear and tear due to overcrowding. Part I of this chapter explains the occupancy standards. These standards describe the methodology and factors the PHA will use to determine the size unit for which a family qualifies, and includes the identification of the minimum and maximum number of household members for each unit size. This part also identifies circumstances under which an exception to the occupancy standards may be approved.

## **5-I.B. DETERMINING UNIT SIZE**

In selecting a family to occupy a particular unit, the PHA may match characteristics of the family with the type of unit available, for example, number of bedrooms [24 CFR 960.206(c)].

HUD does not specify the number of persons who may live in public housing units of various sizes. PHAs are permitted to develop appropriate occupancy standards as long as the standards do not have the effect of discriminating against families with children [PH Occ GB, p. 62].

Although the PHA does determine the size of unit the family qualifies for under the occupancy standards, the PHA does not determine who shares a bedroom/sleeping room.

The PHA's occupancy standards for determining unit size must be applied in a manner consistent with fair housing requirements.

### PHA Policy

The PHA will use the same occupancy standards for each of its units.

The PHA's occupancy standards are as follows:

Head of Household and any additional adult will be issued the first bedroom.

The PHA will assign any additional bedrooms as follows;

One bedroom for each two persons within the household, except in the following circumstances:

Adults and minor children, unless of the same gender, will be issued separate bedrooms.

Live-in aides will be allocated a separate bedroom. No additional bedrooms will be provided for the live-in aide's family.

Single person families will be allocated a zero or one bedroom.

Foster children will be included in determining unit size if they have been certified by the placement agency that the child will be in the unit for 6 months or more.

Minor children of the opposite gender over the age of 10 will be allocated separate bedrooms.

The PHA will reference the following standards in determining the appropriate unit bedroom size for a family:

<b>BEDROOM SIZE</b>	<b>MINIMUM NUMBER OF PERSONS</b>	<b>MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PERSONS</b>
0	1	1
1	1	2
2	2	4
3	3	6
4	4	8
5	6	10
6	8	12

## **5-I.C. EXCEPTIONS TO OCCUPANCY STANDARDS**

### **Types of Exceptions**

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will consider granting exceptions to the occupancy standards at the family's written request if the PHA determines the exception is justified by the relationship, age, gender, health or disability of family members, or other personal circumstances.

For example, an exception may be granted if a larger bedroom size is needed for medical equipment due to its size and/or function, or as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities. An exception may also be granted for a smaller bedroom size in cases where the number of household members exceeds the maximum number of persons allowed for the unit size in which the family resides (according to the chart in Section 5-I.B) and the family does not want to transfer to a larger size unit.

When evaluating exception requests the PHA will consider the size and configuration of the unit. In no case will the PHA grant an exception that is in violation of local housing or occupancy codes, regulations or laws.

Requests from applicants to be placed on the waiting list for a unit size smaller than designated by the occupancy standards will be approved as long as the unit is not overcrowded according to local code, and the family agrees not to request a transfer for a period of two years from the date of admission, unless they have a subsequent change in family size or composition.

To prevent vacancies, the PHA may provide an applicant family with a larger unit than the occupancy standards permit. However, in these cases the family must agree to move to a suitable, smaller unit when another family qualifies for the larger unit and there is an appropriate size unit available for the family to transfer to.

Foster children will be included in determining unit size only if they will be in the unit for more than 6 months.

The PHA will not assign a larger bedroom size due to additions other than by birth adoption, marriage or court awarded custody. Additions to the family other than by birth adoption, marriage or court awarded custody must be maintained for 12 consecutive months before the PHA will assign a larger bedroom size.

Space may be provided for a Full time student who is away at school but whose primary residence is with the family during school recesses. The student must live in the unit at least 51% of the time or have a campus housing contract.

Space will not be provided for a family member who will be absent most of the time such as a member other than co-head or spouse who is away in the military.

All occupants residing in the unit must be approved by the PHA. The family must obtain approval of any additional household members before the person occupies the unit except for additions by birth, adoption or court awarded custody. In those cases the family must inform the PHA within 10 business days.

A child added to the family other than by birth, adoption or court awarded custody may only be added to the unit by a properly executed power of attorney under Minnesota Statutes, Section 524.5-211 for a period not exceeding a year along with proof satisfactory to the PHA of actual residency of the child. Documents such as the birth certificate and social security card are still required.

## **Processing of Exceptions**

### PHA Policy

All requests for exceptions to the occupancy standards must be submitted in writing.

In the case of a request for exception as a reasonable accommodation, the PHA will encourage the resident to make the request in writing. However, the PHA will consider the exception request any time the resident indicates that an accommodation is needed whether or not a formal written request is submitted.

Requests for a larger size unit must explain the need or justification for the larger size unit, and must include appropriate documentation. Requests based on health-related reasons must be verified by a knowledgeable professional source, unless the disability and the disability-related request for accommodation is readily apparent or otherwise known.

The PHA will notify the family of its decision within 10 business days of receiving the family's request and any verifying documentation.



## **PART II: UNIT OFFERS**

24 CFR 1.4(b)(2)(ii); 24 CFR 960.208

### **5-II.A. OVERVIEW**

The PHA must assign eligible applicants to dwelling units in accordance with a plan that is consistent with civil rights and nondiscrimination laws.

In filling an actual or expected vacancy, the PHA must offer the dwelling unit to an applicant in the appropriate offer sequence. The PHA will offer the unit until it is accepted. This section describes the PHA's policies with regard to the number of unit offers that will be made to applicants selected from the waiting list. This section also describes the PHA's policies for offering units with accessibility features.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will maintain a record of units offered, including location, date and circumstances of each offer, each acceptance or rejection, including the reason for the rejection.

### **5-II.B. NUMBER OF OFFERS**

#### PHA Policy

The PHA has adopted a "one and done" offer plan. The PHA will offer to the applicant family the unit with the longest vacancy. If the family rejects the unit without good cause the family will be removed from the waiting list.

If more than one unit of the appropriate type and size is available and each has the same vacancy length, the unit to be offered will be the first unit that is ready for occupancy.



## **5-II.C. TIME LIMIT FOR UNIT OFFER ACCEPTANCE OR REFUSAL**

### PHA Policy

Applicants must accept or refuse a unit offer within 3 business days of the date of the unit offer.

Offers made by telephone will be confirmed by letter. If the PHA is unable to contact an applicant by telephone, the PHA will send a certified letter. If the applicant does not respond in 7 business days, they will be removed from the waiting list. The PHA will send notice to the family of the removal. The notice will inform the family of their right to request an informal hearing and the process for doing so. (See Chapter 14).

## **5-II.D. REFUSALS OF UNIT OFFERS**

### **Good Cause for Unit Refusal**

An elderly or disabled family may decline an offer for designated housing. Such a refusal must not adversely affect the family's position on or placement on the public housing waiting list [24 CFR 945.303(d)].

### PHA Policy

Applicants may refuse to accept a unit offer for “good cause.” *Good cause* includes situations in which an applicant is willing to move but is unable to do so at the time of the unit offer, or the applicant demonstrates that acceptance of the offer would cause undue hardship not related to considerations of the applicant’s race, color, national origin, etc. [PH Occ GB, p. 104]. Examples of good cause for refusal of a unit offer include, but are not limited to, the following:

The family demonstrates to the PHA’s satisfaction that accepting the unit offer will require an adult household member to quit a job, drop out of an educational institution or job training program, or take a child out of day care or an educational program for children with disabilities.

The family demonstrates to the PHA’s satisfaction that accepting the offer will place a family member’s life, health, or safety in jeopardy. The family should offer specific and compelling documentation such as restraining orders: other court orders: risk assessments related to witness protection from a law enforcement agency: documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking in accordance with section 16-VII.D of this ACOP. Reasons offered must be specific to the family. Refusals due to location alone do not qualify for this good cause exemption.

A health professional verifies temporary hospitalization or recovery from illness of the principal household member, other household members (as listed on final application) or live-in aide necessary to the care of the principal household member.

The unit is inappropriate for the applicant's disabilities, or the family does not need the accessible features in the unit offered and does not want to be subject to a 30-day notice to move.

The unit has lead-based paint and the family includes children under the age of six.

In the case of a unit refusal for good cause the applicant will not be removed from the waiting list as described later in this section. The applicant will remain at the top of the waiting list until the family receives an offer for which they do not have good cause to refuse.

The PHA will require documentation of good cause for unit refusals.

### **Unit Refusal without Good Cause**

#### **PHA Policy**

When an applicant rejects the unit offer without good cause, the PHA will remove the applicant's name from the waiting list and send notice to the family of such removal. The notice will inform the family of their right to request an informal hearing and the process for doing so (see Chapter 14).

The applicant may reapply for assistance if the waiting list is open. If the waiting list is not open, the applicant must wait to reapply until the PHA opens the waiting list.

## **5-II.E. ACCESSIBLE UNITS [24 CFR 8.27]**

PHAs must adopt suitable means to assure that information regarding the availability of accessible units reaches eligible individuals with disabilities, and take reasonable nondiscriminatory steps to maximize the utilization of such units by eligible individuals whose disability requires the accessibility features of a particular unit.

When an accessible unit becomes vacant, before offering such units to a non-disabled applicant the PHA must offer such units:

- First, to a current resident of another unit of the same development, or other public housing development under the PHA's control, who has a disability that requires the special features of the vacant unit and is occupying a unit not having such features, or if no such occupant exists, then
- Second, to an eligible qualified applicant on the waiting list having a disability that requires the special features of the vacant unit.

When offering an accessible unit to an applicant not having a disability requiring the accessibility features of the unit, the PHA may require the applicant to agree (and may incorporate this agreement in the lease) to move to a non-accessible unit when available.

### PHA Policy

Families requiring an accessible unit may be over-housed (larger unit than what the family would otherwise qualify for) in such a unit if there are no resident or applicant families of the appropriate size who also require the accessible features of the unit.

When there are no resident or applicant families requiring the accessible features of the unit, including families who would be over-housed, the PHA will offer the unit to a non-disabled applicant.

When offering an accessible unit to a non-disabled applicant, the PHA will require the applicant to agree to move to an available non-accessible unit within 30 days when either a current resident or an applicant needs the features of the unit and there is another unit available for the non-disabled family. This requirement will be a provision of the lease agreement.

## **5-II.F. DESIGNATED HOUSING**

When applicable, the PHA's policies for offering units designated for elderly families only or for disabled families only are described in the PHA's Designated Housing Plan.

### PHA policy

The Washington County CDA does not have any designated housing.

## **Chapter 6**

### **INCOME AND RENT DETERMINATIONS**

[24 CFR Part 5, Subparts E and F; 24 CFR 960, Subpart C]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

A family's annual income is used to determine their income eligibility for the public housing program and is also used to calculate the amount of the family's rent payment. The PHA will use the policies and methods described in this chapter to ensure that only income-eligible families receive assistance and that no family pays more or less rent than is required under the regulations. This chapter describes HUD regulations and PHA policies related to these topics in three parts as follows:

Part I: Annual Income. HUD regulations specify the sources of income to include and exclude to arrive at a family's annual income. These requirements and PHA policies for calculating annual income are found in Part I.

Part II: Adjusted Income. Once annual income has been established HUD regulations require the PHA to subtract from annual income any of five mandatory deductions for which a family qualifies. These requirements and PHA policies for calculating adjusted income are found in Part II.

Part III: Calculating Rent. This part describes the statutory formula for calculating total tenant payment (TTP), the use of utility allowances, and the methodology for determining family rent payment. Also included here are flat rents and the family's choice in rents.



## PART I: ANNUAL INCOME

### 6-I.A. OVERVIEW

The general regulatory definition of *annual income* shown below is from 24 CFR 5.609.

5.609 Annual income.

(a) Annual income means all amounts, monetary or not, which:

(1) Go to, or on behalf of, the family head or spouse (even if temporarily absent) or to any other family member; or

(2) Are anticipated to be received from a source outside the family during the 12-month period following admission or annual reexamination effective date; and

(3) Which are not specifically excluded in paragraph [5.609(c)].

(4) Annual income also means amounts derived (during the 12-month period) from assets to which any member of the family has access.

In addition to this general definition, HUD regulations establish policies for treating specific types of income and assets. The full texts of those portions of the regulations are provided in exhibits at the end of this chapter as follows:

- Annual Income Inclusions (Exhibit 6-1)
- Annual Income Exclusions (Exhibit 6-2)
- Treatment of Family Assets (Exhibit 6-3)
- Earned Income Disallowance (Exhibit 6-4)
- The Effect of Welfare Benefit Reduction (Exhibit 6-5)

Sections 6-I.B and 6-I.C discuss general requirements and methods for calculating annual income. The rest of this section describes how each source of income is treated for the purposes of determining annual income. HUD regulations present income inclusions and exclusions separately [24 CFR 5.609(b) and 24 CFR 5.609(c)]. In this ACOP, however, the discussions of income inclusions and exclusions are integrated by topic (e.g., all policies affecting earned income are discussed together in section 6-I.D). Verification requirements for annual income are discussed in Chapter 7.

## 6-I.B. HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND INCOME

Income received by all family members must be counted unless specifically excluded by the regulations. It is the responsibility of the head of household to report changes in family composition. The rules on which sources of income are counted vary somewhat by family member. The chart below summarizes how family composition affects income determinations.

Summary of Income Included and Excluded by Person	
Live-in aides	Income from all sources is excluded [24 CFR 5.609(c)(5)].
Foster child or foster adult	Income from all sources is excluded [24 CFR 5.609(a)(1)].
Head, spouse, or cohead Other adult family members	All sources of income not specifically excluded by the regulations are included.
Children under 18 years of age	Employment income is excluded [24 CFR 5.609(c)(1)]. All other sources of income, except those specifically excluded by the regulations, are included.
Full-time students 18 years of age or older (not head, spouse, or cohead)	Employment income above \$480/year is excluded [24 CFR 5.609(c)(11)]. All other sources of income, except those specifically excluded by the regulations, are included.

### Temporarily Absent Family Members

The income of family members approved to live in the unit will be counted, even if the family member is temporarily absent from the unit [HCV GB, p. 5-18].

#### PHA Policy

Generally an individual who is or is expected to be absent from the assisted unit for 180 consecutive days or less is considered temporarily absent and continues to be considered a family member. Generally an individual who is or is expected to be absent from the assisted unit for more than 180 consecutive days is considered permanently absent and no longer a family member. Exceptions to this general policy are discussed below.

### *Absent Students*

#### PHA Policy

When someone who has been considered a family member attends school away from home, the person will continue to be considered a family member unless information becomes available to the PHA indicating that the student has established a separate household or the family declares that the student has established a separate household.

If the student has signed a lease, other than a campus housing agreement, then this will be considered evidence of a separate household. A utility bill in the student's name is considered evidence of a separate household.

### ***Absences Due to Placement in Foster Care***

Children temporarily absent from the home as a result of placement in foster care are considered members of the family [24 CFR 5.403].

#### **PHA Policy**

If a child has been placed in foster care, the PHA will verify with the appropriate agency whether and when the child is expected to be returned to the home. Unless the agency confirms that the child has been permanently removed from the home, the child will continue to be counted as a family member.

### ***Absent Head, Spouse, or Cohead***

#### **PHA Policy**

An employed head, spouse, or cohead absent from the unit more than 180 consecutive days due to employment will continue to be considered a family member.

### ***Individuals Confined for Medical Reasons***

#### **PHA Policy**

An individual confined to a nursing home or hospital on a permanent basis is not considered a family member.

If there is a question about the status of a family member, the PHA will request verification from a responsible medical professional and will use this determination. If the responsible medical professional cannot provide a determination, the person generally will be considered temporarily absent. The family may present evidence that the family member is confined on a permanent basis and request that the person not be considered a family member.

### ***Joint Custody of Children***

#### **PHA Policy**

Dependents that are subject to a joint custody arrangement will be considered a member of the family, if they live with the applicant or resident family 51 percent or more of the time.

When more than one applicant or assisted family (regardless of program) are claiming the same dependents as family members, the family with primary custody at the time of the initial examination or reexamination will be able to claim the dependents. If there is a dispute about which family should claim them, the PHA will make the determination based on available documents such as court orders, an IRS income tax return showing which family has claimed the child for income tax purposes, school records, or other credible documentation.



## **Caretakers for a Child**

### **PHA Policy**

The approval of a caretaker is at the PHA's discretion and subject to the PHA's screening criteria. If neither a parent nor a designated guardian remains in a household, the PHA will take the following actions.

If a responsible agency has determined that another adult is to be brought into the unit to care for a child for an indefinite period, the designated caretaker will not be considered a family member until a determination of custody or legal guardianship is made.

If a caretaker has assumed responsibility for a child without the involvement of a responsible agency or formal assignment of custody or legal guardianship, the caretaker will be treated as a visitor for 90 days. After the 90 days has elapsed, the caretaker will be considered a family member unless information is provided that would confirm that the caretaker's role is temporary. In such cases the PHA will extend the caretaker's status as an eligible visitor.

At any time that custody or guardianship legally has been awarded to a caretaker, the lease will be transferred to the caretaker, as head of household.

During any period that a caretaker is considered a visitor, the income of the caretaker is not counted in annual income and the caretaker does not qualify the family for any deductions from income.

The PHA will do criminal and sexual predator background checks on the designated caretaker. The caretaker will be held to the same standards as a live-in aide.

## **6-I.C. ANTICIPATING ANNUAL INCOME**

The PHA is required to count all income “anticipated to be received from a source outside the family during the 12-month period following admission or annual reexamination effective date” [24 CFR 5.609(a)(2)]. Policies related to anticipating annual income are provided below.

### **Basis of Annual Income Projection**

The PHA generally will use current circumstances to determine anticipated income for the coming 12-month period. HUD authorizes the PHA to use other than current circumstances to anticipate income when:

- An imminent change in circumstances is expected [HCV GB, p. 5-17]
- It is not feasible to anticipate a level of income over a 12-month period (e.g., seasonal or cyclic income) [24 CFR 5.609(d)]
- The PHA believes that past income is the best available indicator of expected future income [24 CFR 5.609(d)]

PHAs are required to use HUD’s Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system in its entirety as a third party source to verify employment and income information, and to reduce administrative subsidy payment errors in accordance with HUD administrative guidance [24 CFR 5.233(a)(2)].

HUD allows PHAs to use tenant-provided documents to project income once EIV data has been received in such cases where the family does not dispute the EIV employer data and where the PHA does not determine it is necessary to obtain additional third-party data.

### **PHA Policy**

When EIV is obtained and the family does not dispute the EIV employer data, the PHA will use current tenant-provided documents to project annual income. When the tenant-provided documents are pay stubs, the PHA will make every effort to obtain current and consecutive pay stubs dated within the last 120 days.

The PHA will obtain written and/or oral third-party verification in accordance with the verification requirements and policy in Chapter 7 in the following cases:

If EIV or other UIV data is not available,

If the family disputes the accuracy of the EIV employer data, and/or

If the PHA determines additional information is needed.

In such cases, the PHA will review and analyze current data to anticipate annual income. In all cases, the family file will be documented with a clear record of the reason for the decision, and a clear audit trail will be left as to how the PHA annualized projected income.

When the PHA cannot readily anticipate income based upon current circumstances (e.g., in the case of seasonal employment, unstable working hours, or suspected fraud), the PHA will review and analyze historical data for patterns of employment, paid benefits, and receipt of other income and use the results of this analysis to establish annual income.

Any time current circumstances are not used to project annual income, a clear rationale for the decision will be documented in the file. In all such cases the family may present information and documentation to the PHA to show why the historic pattern does not represent the family's anticipated income.

### ***Known Changes in Income***

If the PHA verifies an upcoming increase or decrease in income, annual income will be calculated by applying each income amount to the appropriate part of the 12-month period.

**Example:** An employer reports that a full-time employee who has been receiving \$8/hour will begin to receive \$8.25/hour in the eighth week after the effective date of the reexamination. In such a case the PHA would calculate annual income as follows:  $(\$8/\text{hour} \times 40 \text{ hours} \times 7 \text{ weeks}) + (\$8.25 \times 40 \text{ hours} \times 45 \text{ weeks})$ .

The family may present information that demonstrates that implementing a change before its effective date would create a hardship for the family. In such cases the PHA will calculate annual income using current circumstances and then require an interim reexamination when the change actually occurs. This requirement will be imposed even if the PHA's policy on reexaminations does not require interim reexaminations for other types of changes.

When tenant-provided third-party documents are used to anticipate annual income, they will be dated within the last 120 days of the reexamination interview date.

### **Projecting Income**

In HUD's EIV webcast of January 2008, HUD made clear that PHAs are not to use EIV quarterly wages to project annual income.

## **6-I.D. EARNED INCOME**

### **Types of Earned Income Included in Annual Income**

#### ***Wages and Related Compensation [24 CFR 5.609(b)(1)]***

The full amount, before any payroll deductions, of wages and salaries, overtime pay, commissions, fees, tips and bonuses, and other compensation for personal services is included in annual income.

#### **PHA Policy**

For persons who regularly receive bonuses or commissions, the PHA will verify and then average amounts received for the two years preceding admission or reexamination. If only a one-year history is available, the PHA will use the prior year amounts. In either case the family may provide for the PHA's consideration, a credible justification for not using this history to anticipate future bonuses or commissions. If a new employee has not yet received any bonuses or commissions, the PHA will count only the amount estimated by the employer. The file will be documented appropriately.

#### ***Some Types of Military Pay***

All regular pay, special pay and allowances of a member of the Armed Forces are counted [24 CFR 5.609(b)(8)] except for the special pay to a family member serving in the Armed Forces who is exposed to hostile fire [24 CFR 5.609(c)(7)].

### **Types of Earned Income Not Counted in Annual Income**

#### ***Temporary, Nonrecurring, or Sporadic Income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(9)]***

This type of income (including gifts) is not included in annual income.

#### **PHA Policy**

Sporadic income is income that is not received periodically and cannot be reliably predicted. For example, the income of an individual who works occasionally as a handyman would be considered sporadic if future work could not be anticipated and no historic, stable pattern of income existed.

#### ***Children's Earnings [24 CFR 5.609(c)(1)]***

Employment income earned by children (including foster children) under the age of 18 years is not included in annual income. (See Eligibility chapter for a definition of *foster children*.)

#### ***Certain Earned Income of Full-Time Students***

Earnings in excess of \$480 for each full-time student 18 years old or older (except for the head, spouse, or cohead) are not counted [24 CFR 5.609(c)(11)]. To be considered "full-time," a student must be considered "full-time" by an educational institution with a degree or certificate program [HCV GB, p. 5-29].

#### ***Income of a Live-in Aide***

Income earned by a live-in aide, as defined in [24 CFR 5.403], is not included in annual income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(5)]. (See Eligibility chapter for a full discussion of live-in aides.)

***Income Earned under Certain Federal Programs [24 CFR 5.609(c)(17)]***

Income from some federal programs is specifically excluded from consideration as income, including:

- Payments to volunteers under the Domestic Volunteer Services Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 5044(g), 5058)
- Awards under the federal work-study program (20 U.S.C. 1087 uu)
- Payments received from programs funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1985 (42 U.S.C. 3056(f))
- Allowances, earnings, and payments to AmeriCorps participants under the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12637(d))
- Allowances, earnings, and payments to participants in programs funded under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2931)

***Resident Service Stipend [24 CFR 5.600(c)(8)(iv)]***

Amounts received under a resident service stipend are not included in annual income. A resident service stipend is a modest amount (not to exceed \$200 per individual per month) received by a resident for performing a service for the PHA, on a part-time basis, that enhances the quality of life in the development. Such services may include, but are not limited to, fire patrol, hall monitoring, lawn maintenance, resident initiatives coordination, and serving as a member of the PHA's governing board. No resident may receive more than one such stipend during the same period of time.

### ***State and Local Employment Training Programs***

Incremental earnings and benefits to any family member resulting from participation in qualifying state or local employment training programs (including training programs not affiliated with a local government) and training of a family member as resident management staff are excluded from annual income. Amounts excluded by this provision must be received under employment training programs with clearly defined goals and objectives and are excluded only for the period during which the family member participates in the training program [24 CFR 5.609(c)(8)(v)].

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA defines *training program* as “a learning process with goals and objectives, generally having a variety of components, and taking place in a series of sessions over a period of time. It is designed to lead to a higher level of proficiency, and it enhances the individual’s ability to obtain employment. It may have performance standards to measure proficiency. Training may include, but is not limited to: (1) classroom training in a specific occupational skill, (2) on-the-job training with wages subsidized by the program, or (3) basic education” [expired Notice PIH 98-2, p. 3].

The PHA defines *incremental earnings and benefits* as the difference between (1) the total amount of welfare assistance and earnings of a family member prior to enrollment in a training program and (2) the total amount of welfare assistance and earnings of the family member after enrollment in the program [expired Notice PIH 98-2, pp. 3–4].

In calculating the incremental difference, the PHA will use as the pre-enrollment income the total annualized amount of the family member’s welfare assistance and earnings reported on the family’s most recently completed HUD-50058.

End of participation in a training program must be reported in accordance with the PHA's interim reporting requirements (see chapter on reexaminations).

### ***HUD-Funded Training Programs***

Amounts received under training programs funded in whole or in part by HUD [24 CFR 5.609(c)(8)(i)] are excluded from annual income. Eligible sources of funding for the training include operating subsidy, Section 8 administrative fees, and modernization, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME program, and other grant funds received from HUD.

#### **PHA Policy**

To qualify as a training program, the program must meet the definition of *training program* provided above for state and local employment training programs.

***Earned Income Tax Credit.*** Earned income tax credit (EITC) refund payments received on or after January 1, 1991 (26 U.S.C. 32(j)), are excluded from annual income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(17)]. Although many families receive the EITC annually when they file taxes, an EITC can also be received throughout the year. The prorated share of the annual EITC is included in the employee's payroll check.

***Earned Income Disallowance.*** The earned income disallowance is discussed in section 6-I.E below.

## **6-I.E. EARNED INCOME DISALLOWANCE [24 CFR 960.255 Streamlining Final Rule (SFR) Federal Register 3/8/16]**

The earned income disallowance (EID) encourages people to enter the work force by not including the full value of increases in earned income for a period of time. The full text of 24 CFR 960.255 is included as Exhibit 6-4 at the end of this chapter.

Eligibility criteria and limitations on the disallowance are summarized below.

### **Eligibility**

This disallowance applies only to individuals in families already participating in the public housing program (not at initial examination). To qualify, the family must experience an increase in annual income that is the result of one of the following events:

- Employment of a family member who was previously unemployed for one or more years prior to employment. *Previously unemployed* includes a person who annually has earned not more than the minimum wage applicable to the community multiplied by 500 hours. The applicable minimum wage is the federal minimum wage unless there is a higher state or local minimum wage.
- Increased earnings by a family member whose earnings increase during participation in an economic self-sufficiency or job-training program. A self-sufficiency program includes a program designed to encourage, assist, train, or facilitate the economic independence of HUD-assisted families or to provide work to such families [24 CFR 5.603(b)].
- New employment or increased earnings by a family member who has received benefits or services under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or any other state program funded under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act within the past six months. If the benefits are received in the form of monthly maintenance, there is no minimum amount. If the benefits or services are received in a form other than monthly maintenance, such as one-time payments, wage subsidies, or transportation assistance, the total amount received over the six-month period must be at least \$500.



## **Calculation of the Disallowance**

Calculation of the earned income disallowance for an eligible member of a qualified family begins with a comparison of the member's current income with his or her "baseline income." The family member's baseline income is his or her income immediately prior to qualifying for the EID. The family member's baseline income remains constant throughout the period that he or she is participating in EID.

## **Calculation Method**

### ***Initial 12-Month Exclusion***

During the initial exclusion period of 12 consecutive months, the full amount (100 percent) of any increase in income attributable to new employment or increased earnings is excluded.

#### PHA Policy

The initial EID exclusion period will begin on the first of the month following the date an eligible member of a qualified family is first employed or first experiences an increase in earnings.

### ***Second 12-Month Exclusion***

During the second exclusion period of 12 consecutive months, the PHA must exclude at least 50 percent of any increase in income attributable to employment or increased earnings.

#### PHA Policy

During the second 12-month exclusion period, the PHA will exclude 100 percent of any increase in income attributable to new employment or increased earnings.

### ***Lifetime Limitation***

The EID has a two-year (24-month) lifetime maximum. The two-year eligibility period begins at the same time that the initial exclusion period begins and ends 24 months later. During the 24-month period, an individual remains eligible for EID even if they receive assistance from a different housing agency, move between public housing and Section 8 assistance, or have breaks in assistance.

## **Individual Savings Accounts [24 CFR 960.255(d)]**

### **PHA Policy**

The PHA chooses not to establish a system of individual savings accounts (ISAs) for families who qualify for the EID.

The following rules pertaining to ISAs do not apply to this public housing program.

A qualified family paying income-based rent may choose an ISA instead of being given the EID. The PHA must advise the family that the ISA option is available. Families who choose the ISA will pay the higher rent and the PHA will deposit the difference between the higher rent and the EID rent in the savings account.

Amounts deposited to ISAs may only be withdrawn for the following reasons:

- Because the family is purchasing a home
- To pay education costs of family members
- Because the family is moving out of public or assisted housing
- To pay any other expenses the PHA authorizes to promote economic self-sufficiency

The PHA is required to maintain ISAs in interest bearing accounts, for which the family is credited with interest earned. The PHA may not charge the family a fee for maintaining the account.

At least once each year the PHA must provide the family with a statement of the balance in their account, including any interest earned, if required by state law.

### **PHA Policy**

The PHA chooses not to establish a system of individual savings accounts (ISAs) for families who qualify for EID.

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## **6-I.F. BUSINESS INCOME [24 CFR 5.609(b)(2)]**

Annual income includes “the net income from the operation of a business or profession. Expenditures for business expansion or amortization of capital indebtedness shall not be used as deductions in determining net income. An allowance for depreciation of assets used in a business or profession may be deducted, based on straight line depreciation, as provided in Internal Revenue Service regulations. Any withdrawal of cash or assets from the operation of a business or profession will be included in income, except to the extent the withdrawal is reimbursement of cash or assets invested in the operation by the family” [24 CFR 5.609(b)(2)].

### **Business Expenses**

Net income is “gross income less business expense” [HCV GB, p. 5-19].

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will require the tenant to contact their tax preparer to have an initial assessment done of net income. The PHA will base business income on this initial assessment. After the first complete year of operation the PHA will request copies of the business owner’s tax returns.

For purposes of self –employment the PHA will annualize income from the previous year tax return unless the resident verifies a change in the amount. Resident will be required to provide certification of the change.

### **Business Expansion**

HUD regulations do not permit the PHA to deduct from gross income expenses for business expansion.

#### PHA Policy

*Business expansion* is defined as any capital expenditures made to add new business activities, to expand current facilities, or to operate the business in additional locations. For example, purchase of a street sweeper by a construction business for the purpose of adding street cleaning to the services offered by the business would be considered a business expansion. Similarly, the purchase of a property by a hair care business to open at a second location would be considered a business expansion.

## **Capital Indebtedness**

HUD regulations do not permit the PHA to deduct from gross income the amortization of capital indebtedness.

### PHA Policy

*Capital indebtedness* is defined as the principal portion of the payment on a capital asset such as land, buildings, and machinery. This means the PHA will allow as a business expense interest, but not principal, paid on capital indebtedness.

## **Negative Business Income**

If the net income from a business is negative, no business income will be included in annual income; a negative amount will not be used to offset other family income.

## **Withdrawal of Cash or Assets from a Business**

HUD regulations require the PHA to include in annual income the withdrawal of cash or assets from the operation of a business or profession unless the withdrawal reimburses a family member for cash or assets invested in the business by the family.

### PHA Policy

Acceptable investments in a business include cash loans and contributions of assets or equipment. For example, if a member of a tenant family provided an up-front loan of \$2,000 to help a business get started, the PHA will not count as income any withdrawals from the business up to the amount of this loan until the loan has been repaid. Investments do not include the value of labor contributed to the business without compensation.

## **Co-owned Businesses**

### PHA Policy

If a business is co-owned with someone outside the family, the family must document the share of the business it owns. If the family's share of the income is lower than its share of ownership, the family must document the reasons for the difference.

## **6-I.G. ASSETS [24 CFR 5.609(b)(3) and 24 CFR 5.603(b)]**

### **Overview**

There is no asset limitation for participation in the public housing program. However, HUD requires that the PHA include in annual income the anticipated “interest, dividends, and other net income of any kind from real or personal property” [24 CFR 5.609(b)(3)]. This section discusses how the income from various types of assets is determined. For most types of assets, the PHA must determine the value of the asset in order to compute income from the asset. Therefore, for each asset type, this section discusses:

- How the value of the asset will be determined
- How income from the asset will be calculated

Exhibit 6-1 provides the regulatory requirements for calculating income from assets [24 CFR 5.609(b)(3)], and Exhibit 6-3 provides the regulatory definition of *net family assets*. This section begins with a discussion of general policies related to assets and then provides HUD rules and PHA policies related to each type of asset.

Optional policies for family self-certification of assets are found in Chapter 7.

### **General Policies**

#### ***Income from Assets***

The PHA generally will use current circumstances to determine both the value of an asset and the anticipated income from the asset. As is true for all sources of income, HUD authorizes the PHA to use other than current circumstances to anticipate income when (1) an imminent change in circumstances is expected (2) it is not feasible to anticipate a level of income over 12 months or (3) the PHA believes that past income is the best indicator of anticipated income. For example, if a family member owns real property that typically receives rental income but the property is currently vacant, the PHA can take into consideration past rental income along with the prospects of obtaining a new tenant.

#### **PHA Policy**

Any time current circumstances are not used to determine asset income, a clear rationale for the decision will be documented in the file. In such cases the family may present information and documentation to the PHA to show why the asset income determination does not represent the family’s anticipated asset income.

## ***Valuing Assets***

The calculation of asset income sometimes requires the PHA to make a distinction between an asset's market value and its cash value.

- The market value of an asset is its worth in the market (e.g., the amount a buyer would pay for real estate or the total value of an investment account).
- The cash value of an asset is its market value less all reasonable amounts that would be incurred when converting the asset to cash.

### **PHA Policy**

Reasonable costs that would be incurred when disposing of an asset include, but are not limited to, penalties for premature withdrawal, broker and legal fees, and settlement costs incurred in real estate transactions [HCV GB, p. 5-28 and PH Occ GB, p. 121].

## ***Lump-Sum Receipts***

Payments that are received in a single lump sum, such as inheritances, capital gains, lottery winnings, insurance settlements, and proceeds from the sale of property, are generally considered assets, not income. However, such lump-sum receipts are counted as assets only if they are retained by a family in a form recognizable as an asset (e.g., deposited in a savings or checking account) [RHIIP FAQs]. (For a discussion of lump-sum payments that represent the delayed start of a periodic payment, most of which are counted as income, see sections 6-I.H and 6-I.I.)

### ***Imputing Income from Assets [24 CFR 5.609(b)(3), Notice PIH 2012-29]***

When net family assets are \$5,000 or less, the PHA will include in annual income the actual income anticipated to be derived from the assets. When the family has net family assets in excess of \$5,000, the PHA will include in annual income the greater of (1) the actual income derived from the assets or (2) the imputed income. Imputed income from assets is calculated by multiplying the total cash value of all family assets by an average passbook savings rate as determined by the PHA.

- Note: The HUD field office no longer provides an interest rate for imputed asset income. The “safe harbor” is now for the PHA to establish a passbook rate within 0.75 percent of a national average.
- The PHA must review its passbook rate annually to ensure that it remains within 0.75 percent of the national average.

### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will initially set the imputed asset passbook rate at the national rate established by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).

The PHA will review the passbook rate annually, in December of each year. The rate will not be adjusted unless the current PHA rate is no longer within 0.75 percent of the national rate. If it is no longer within 0.75 percent of the national rate, the passbook rate will be set at the current national rate.

Changes to the passbook rate will take effect within 60 days of PHA board approval.

### ***Determining Actual Anticipated Income from Assets***

It may or may not be necessary for the PHA to use the value of an asset to compute the actual anticipated income from the asset. When the value is required to compute the anticipated income from an asset, the market value of the asset is used. For example, if the asset is a property for which a family receives rental income, the anticipated income is determined by annualizing the actual monthly rental amount received for the property; it is not based on the property's market value. However, if the asset is a savings account, the anticipated income is determined by multiplying the market value of the account by the interest rate on the account.

### ***Withdrawal of Cash or Liquidation of Investments***

Any withdrawal of cash or assets from an investment will be included in income except to the extent that the withdrawal reimburses amounts invested by the family. For example, when a family member retires, the amount received by the family from a retirement investment plan is not counted as income until the family has received payments equal to the amount the family member deposited into the retirement investment plan.

### ***Jointly Owned Assets***

The regulation at 24 CFR 5.609(a)(4) specifies that annual income includes "amounts derived (during the 12-month period) from assets to which any member of the family has access."

#### **PHA Policy**

If an asset is owned by more than one person and any family member has unrestricted access to the asset, the PHA will count the full value of the asset. A family member has unrestricted access to an asset when he or she can legally dispose of the asset without the consent of any of the other owners. An asset is not effectively owned by a family member when (1) the asset and any income it earns accrue to the benefit of someone else who is not a member of the family and (2) that other person is responsible for income taxes incurred on income generated by the asset.

If an asset is owned by more than one person, including a family member, but the family member does not have unrestricted access to the asset, the PHA will prorate the asset according to the percentage of ownership. If no percentage is specified or provided for by state or local law, the PHA will prorate the asset evenly among all owners.

### ***Assets Disposed Of for Less than Fair Market Value [24 CFR 5.603(b)]***

HUD regulations require the PHA to count as a current asset any business or family asset that was disposed of for less than fair market value during the two years prior to the effective date of the examination/reexamination, except as noted below.

#### ***Minimum Threshold***

The PHA may set a threshold below which assets disposed of for less than fair market value will not be counted [HCV GB, p. 5-27].

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will not include the value of assets disposed of for less than fair market value unless the cumulative fair market value of all assets disposed of during the past two years exceeds the gross amount received for the assets by more than \$1,000.

When the two-year period expires, the income assigned to the disposed asset(s) also expires. If the two-year period ends between annual recertifications, the family may request an interim recertification to eliminate consideration of the asset(s).

Assets placed by the family in nonrevocable trusts are considered assets disposed of for less than fair market value except when the assets placed in trust were received through settlements or judgments.

#### ***Separation or Divorce***

The regulation also specifies that assets are not considered disposed of for less than fair market value if they are disposed of as part of a separation or divorce settlement and the applicant or tenant receives important consideration not measurable in dollar terms.

#### **PHA Policy**

All assets disposed of as part of a separation or divorce settlement will be considered assets for which important consideration not measurable in monetary terms has been received. In order to qualify for this exemption, a family member must be subject to a formal separation or divorce settlement agreement established through arbitration, mediation, or court order.

#### ***Foreclosure or Bankruptcy***

Assets are not considered disposed of for less than fair market value when the disposition is the result of a foreclosure or bankruptcy sale.

#### ***Family Declaration***

#### **PHA Policy**

Families must sign a declaration form at initial certification and each annual recertification identifying all assets that have been disposed of for less than fair market value or declaring that no assets have been disposed of for less than fair market value. The PHA may verify the value of the assets disposed of if other information available to the PHA does not appear to agree with the information reported by the family.



## **Types of Assets**

### ***Checking and Savings Accounts***

For regular checking accounts and savings accounts, *cash value* has the same meaning as *market value*. If a checking account does not bear interest, the anticipated income from the account is zero.

#### PHA Policy

In determining the value of a checking account, the PHA will use the current month balance.

In determining the value of a savings account, the PHA will use the current balance.

In determining the anticipated income from an interest-bearing checking or savings account, the PHA will multiply the value of the account by the current rate of interest paid on the account.

### ***Investment Accounts Such as Stocks, Bonds, Saving Certificates, and Money Market Funds***

Interest or dividends earned by investment accounts are counted as actual income from assets even when the earnings are reinvested. The cash value of such an asset is determined by deducting from the market value any broker fees, penalties for early withdrawal, or other costs of converting the asset to cash.

#### PHA Policy

In determining the market value of an investment account, the PHA will use the value of the account on the most recent investment report.

How anticipated income from an investment account will be calculated depends on whether the rate of return is known. For assets that are held in an investment account with a known rate of return (e.g., savings certificates), asset income will be calculated based on that known rate (market value multiplied by rate of earnings). When the anticipated rate of return is not known (e.g., stocks), the PHA will calculate asset income based on the earnings for the most recent reporting period.

### ***Equity in Real Property or Other Capital Investments***

Equity (cash value) in a property or other capital asset is the estimated current market value of the asset less the unpaid balance on all loans secured by the asset and reasonable costs (such as broker fees) that would be incurred in selling the asset [HCV GB, p. 5-25 and PH, p. 121].

#### **PHA Policy**

In determining the equity, the PHA will determine market value by examining the most recent property tax statement.

The PHA will first use the payoff amount for the loan (mortgage) as the unpaid balance to calculate equity. If the payoff amount is not available, the PHA will use the basic loan balance information to deduct from the market value in the equity calculation.

Equity in real property and other capital investments is considered in the calculation of asset income **except** for the following types of assets:

- Equity accounts in HUD homeownership programs [24 CFR 5.603(b)]
- Equity in real property when a family member's main occupation is real estate [HCV GB, p. 5-25]. This real estate is considered a business asset, and income related to this asset will be calculated as described in section 6-I.F.
- Interests in Indian Trust lands [24 CFR 5.603(b)]
- Real property and capital assets that are part of an active business or farming operation [HCV GB, p. 5-25]

The PHA must also deduct from the equity the reasonable costs for converting the asset to cash. Using the formula for calculating equity specified above, the net cash value of real property is the market value of the loan (mortgage) minus the expenses to convert to cash [Notice PIH 2012-3].

#### **PHA Policy**

For the purposes of calculating expenses to convert to cash for real property, the PHA will use ten percent of the market value of the home.

A family may have real property as an asset in two ways: (1) owning the property itself and (2) holding a mortgage or deed of trust on the property. In the case of a property owned by a family member, the anticipated asset income generally will be in the form of rent or other payment for the use of the property. If the property generates no income, actual anticipated income from the asset will be zero.

In the case of a mortgage or deed of trust held by a family member, the outstanding balance (unpaid principal) is the cash value of the asset. The interest portion only of payments made to the family in accordance with the terms of the mortgage or deed of trust is counted as anticipated asset income.

#### PHA Policy

In the case of capital investments owned jointly with others not living in a family's unit, a prorated share of the property's cash value will be counted as an asset unless the PHA determines that the family receives no income from the property and is unable to sell or otherwise convert the asset to cash.

#### ***Trusts***

A *trust* is a legal arrangement generally regulated by state law in which one party (the creator or grantor) transfers property to a second party (the trustee) who holds the property for the benefit of one or more third parties (the beneficiaries).

##### *Revocable Trusts*

If any member of a family has the right to withdraw the funds in a trust, the value of the trust is considered an asset [HCV GB, p. 5-25]. Any income earned as a result of investment of trust funds is counted as actual asset income, whether the income is paid to the family or deposited in the trust.

##### *Nonrevocable Trusts*

In cases where a trust is not revocable by, or under the control of, any member of a family, the value of the trust fund is not considered an asset. However, any income distributed to the family from such a trust is counted as a periodic payment or a lump-sum receipt, as appropriate [24 CFR 5.603(b)]. (Periodic payments are covered in section 6-I.H. Lump-sum receipts are discussed earlier in this section.)

#### ***Retirement Accounts***

##### *Company Retirement/Pension Accounts*

In order to correctly include or exclude as an asset any amount held in a company retirement or pension account by an employed person, the PHA must know whether the money is accessible before retirement [HCV GB, p. 5-26].

While a family member is employed, only the amount the family member can withdraw without retiring or terminating employment is counted as an asset [HCV GB, p. 5-26].

After a family member retires or terminates employment, any amount distributed to the family member is counted as a periodic payment or a lump-sum receipt, as appropriate [HCV GB, p. 5-26], except to the extent that it represents funds invested in the account by the family member. (For more on periodic payments, see section 6-I.H.) The balance in the account is counted as an asset only if it remains accessible to the family member.

##### *IRA, Keogh, and Similar Retirement Savings Accounts*

IRA, Keogh, and similar retirement savings accounts are counted as assets even though early withdrawal would result in a penalty [HCV GB, p. 5-25].

### ***Personal Property***

Personal property held as an investment, such as gems, jewelry, coin collections, antique cars, etc., is considered an asset [HCV GB, p. 5-25].

#### **PHA Policy**

In determining the value of personal property held as an investment, the PHA will use the family's estimate of the value. The PHA may obtain an appraisal if there is reason to believe that the family's estimated value is off by \$50 or more. The family must cooperate with the appraiser but cannot be charged any costs related to the appraisal.

Generally, personal property held as an investment generates no income until it is disposed of. If regular income is generated (e.g., income from renting the personal property), the amount that is expected to be earned in the coming year is counted as actual income from the asset.

Necessary items of personal property are not considered assets [24 CFR 5.603(b)].

#### **PHA Policy**

Necessary personal property consists of only those items not held as an investment. It may include clothing, furniture, household furnishings, jewelry, and vehicles, including those specially equipped for persons with disabilities.

### ***Life Insurance***

The cash value of a life insurance policy available to a family member before death, such as a whole life or universal life policy, is included in the calculation of the value of the family's assets [HCV GB 5-25]. The cash value is the surrender value. If such a policy earns dividends or interest that the family could elect to receive, the anticipated amount of dividends or interest is counted as income from the asset whether or not the family actually receives it.

## **6-I.H. PERIODIC PAYMENTS**

Periodic payments are forms of income received on a regular basis. HUD regulations specify periodic payments that are and are not included in annual income.

### **Periodic Payments Included in Annual Income**

- Periodic payments from sources such as social security, unemployment and welfare assistance, annuities, insurance policies, retirement funds, and pensions. However, periodic payments from retirement accounts, annuities, and similar forms of investments are counted only after they exceed the amount contributed by the family [24 CFR 5.609(b)(4) and (b)(3)].
- Disability or death benefits and lottery receipts paid periodically, rather than in a single lump sum [24 CFR 5.609(b)(4) and HCV, p. 5-14]

### **Lump-Sum Payments for the Delayed Start of a Periodic Payment**

Most lump sums received as a result of delays in processing periodic payments, such as unemployment or welfare assistance, are counted as income. However, lump-sum receipts for the delayed start of periodic social security or supplemental security income (SSI) payments are not counted as income. Additionally, any deferred disability benefits that are received in a lump sum or in prospective monthly amounts from the Department of Veterans Affairs are to be excluded from annual income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(14)].

#### **PHA Policy**

When a delayed-start payment is received and reported during the period in which the PHA is processing an annual reexamination, the PHA will adjust the tenant rent retroactively for the period the payment was intended to cover. The family may pay in full any amount due or request to enter into a repayment agreement with the PHA.

See the chapter on reexaminations for information about a family's obligation to report lump-sum receipts between annual reexaminations.

### **Treatment of Overpayment Deductions from Social Security Benefits**

The PHA must make a special calculation of annual income when the Social Security Administration (SSA) overpays an individual, resulting in a withholding or deduction from his or her benefit amount until the overpayment is paid in full. The amount and duration of the withholding will vary depending on the amount of the overpayment and the percent of the benefit rate withheld. Regardless of the amount withheld or the length of the withholding period, the PHA must use the reduced benefit amount after deducting only the amount of the overpayment withholding from the gross benefit amount [Notice PIH 2012-10].

## Periodic Payments Excluded from Annual Income

- Payments received for the care of foster children or foster adults (usually persons with disabilities, unrelated to the tenant family, who are unable to live alone) [24 CFR 5.609(c)(2)]. Kinship care payments are considered equivalent to foster care payments and are also excluded from annual income [Notice PIH 2012-1].

### PHA Policy

The PHA will exclude payments for the care of foster children and foster adults only if the care is provided through an official arrangement with a local welfare agency [HCV GB, p. 5-18].

- Amounts paid by a state agency to a family with a member who has a developmental disability and is living at home to offset the cost of services and equipment needed to keep the developmentally disabled family member at home [24 CFR 5.609(c)(16)]
- Amounts received under the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (42 U.S.C. 1626(c)) [24 CFR 5.609(c)(17)]
- Amounts received under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858q) [24 CFR 5.609(c)(17)]
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) refund payments (26 U.S.C. 32(j)) [24 CFR 5.609(c)(17)].  
*Note:* EITC may be paid periodically if the family elects to receive the amount due as part of payroll payments from an employer.
- Lump sums received as a result of delays in processing Social Security and SSI payments (see section 6-I.H.) [24 CFR 5.609(c)(14)].
- Lump-sums or prospective monthly amounts received as deferred disability benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)[24 CFR5.609(c)(14)].

### **6-I.I. PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF EARNINGS**

Payments in lieu of earnings, such as unemployment and disability compensation, worker's compensation, and severance pay, are counted as income [24 CFR 5.609(b)(5)] if they are received either in the form of periodic payments or in the form of a lump-sum amount or prospective monthly amounts for the delayed start of a periodic payment. If they are received in a one-time lump sum (as a settlement, for instance), they are treated as lump-sum receipts [24 CFR 5.609(c)(3)]. (See also the discussion of periodic payments in section 6-I.H and the discussion of lump-sum receipts in section 6-I.G.)

## **6-I.J. WELFARE ASSISTANCE**

### **Overview**

Welfare assistance is counted in annual income. Welfare assistance includes Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and any payments to individuals or families based on need that are made under programs funded separately or jointly by federal, state, or local governments [24 CFR 5.603(b)].

### **Sanctions Resulting in the Reduction of Welfare Benefits [24 CFR 5.615]**

The PHA must make a special calculation of annual income when the welfare agency imposes certain sanctions on certain families. The full text of the regulation at 24 CFR 5.615 is provided as Exhibit 6-5. The requirements are summarized below. This rule applies only if a family was a public housing resident at the time the sanction was imposed.

#### ***Covered Families***

The families covered by 24 CFR 5.615 are those “who receive welfare assistance or other public assistance benefits (‘welfare benefits’) from a State or other public agency (‘welfare agency’) under a program for which Federal, State or local law requires that a member of the family must participate in an economic self-sufficiency program as a condition for such assistance” [24 CFR 5.615(b)]

#### ***Imputed Income***

When a welfare agency imposes a sanction that reduces a family’s welfare income because the family commits fraud or fails to comply with the agency’s economic self-sufficiency program or work activities requirement, the PHA must include in annual income “imputed” welfare income. The PHA must request that the welfare agency provide the reason for the reduction of benefits and the amount of the reduction of benefits. The imputed welfare income is the amount that the benefits were reduced as a result of the sanction.

This requirement does not apply to reductions in welfare benefits: (1) at the expiration of the lifetime or other time limit on the payment of welfare benefits, (2) if a family member is unable to find employment even though the family member has complied with the welfare agency economic self-sufficiency or work activities requirements, or (3) because a family member has not complied with other welfare agency requirements [24 CFR 5.615(b)(2)].

For special procedures related to grievance hearings based upon the PHA’s denial of a family’s request to lower rent when the family experiences a welfare benefit reduction, see Chapter 14, Grievances and Appeals.

#### ***Offsets***

The amount of the imputed welfare income is offset by the amount of additional income the family begins to receive after the sanction is imposed. When the additional income equals or exceeds the imputed welfare income, the imputed income is reduced to zero [24 CFR 5.615(c)(4)].



## **6-I.K. PERIODIC AND DETERMINABLE ALLOWANCES [24 CFR 5.609(b)(7)]**

Annual income includes periodic and determinable allowances, such as alimony and child support payments, and regular contributions or gifts received from organizations or from persons not residing with a tenant family.

### **Alimony and Child Support**

The PHA must count alimony or child support amounts awarded as part of a divorce or separation agreement.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will count court-awarded amounts for alimony and child support unless the PHA verifies that (1) the payments are not being made and (2) the family has made reasonable efforts to collect amounts due, including filing with courts or agencies responsible for enforcing payments [HCV GB, pp. 5-23 and 5-47].

Families who do not have court-awarded alimony and child support awards are not required to seek a court award and are not required to take independent legal action to obtain collection.

The tenant must certify in writing that child support has stopped within 5 days of a change and that no future payments are expected. The PHA will calculate the Interim Rent Change for the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month after a full calendar month of no receipt of child support payments. The tenant must report in writing within 5 days of the change if child support resumes.

### **Regular Contributions or Gifts**

The PHA must count as income regular monetary and nonmonetary contributions or gifts from persons not residing with a tenant family [24 CFR 5.609(b)(7)]. Temporary, nonrecurring, or sporadic income and gifts are not counted [24 CFR 5.609(c)(9)].

#### PHA Policy

Examples of regular contributions include: (1) regular payment of a family's bills (e.g., utilities, telephone, rent, credit cards, and car payments), (2) cash or other liquid assets provided to any family member on a regular basis, and (3) "in-kind" contributions such as groceries and clothing provided to a family on a regular basis.

Nonmonetary contributions will be valued at the cost of purchasing the items, as determined by the PHA. For contributions that may vary from month to month (e.g., utility payments), the PHA will include an average amount based upon past history.

## 6-I.L. ADDITIONAL EXCLUSIONS FROM ANNUAL INCOME

Other exclusions contained in 24 CFR 5.609(c) and updated by FR Notice 5/20/14 that have not been discussed earlier in this chapter include the following:

- Reimbursement of medical expenses [24 CFR 5.609(c)(4)]
- The full amount of student financial assistance paid directly to the student or to the educational institution [24 CFR 5.609(c)(6)].

### PHA Policy

Regular financial support from parents or guardians to students for food, clothing personal items, and entertainment **is not** considered student financial assistance and is included **in** annual income.

- Amounts received by participants in other publicly assisted programs which are specifically for or in reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred and which are made solely to allow participation in a specific program [24 CFR 5.609(c)(8)(iii)]
- Amounts received by a person with a disability that are disregarded for a limited time for purposes of Supplemental Security Income eligibility and benefits because they are set aside for use under a Plan to Attain Self-Sufficiency (PASS) [(24 CFR 5.609(c)(8)(ii)]
- Reparation payments paid by a foreign government pursuant to claims filed under the laws of that government by persons who were persecuted during the Nazi era [24 CFR 5.609(c)(10)]
- Adoption assistance payments in excess of \$480 per adopted child [24 CFR 5.609(c)(12)]
- Refunds or rebates on property taxes paid on the dwelling unit [24 CFR 5.609(c)(15)]
- Amounts paid by a state agency to a family with a member who has a developmental disability and is living at home to offset the cost of services and equipment needed to keep the developmentally disabled family member at home [24 CFR 5.609(c)(16)]
- Amounts specifically excluded by any other federal statute [24 CFR 5.609(c)(17), FR Notice 5/20/14]. HUD publishes an updated list of these exclusions periodically. It includes:
  - (a) The value of the allotment provided to an eligible household under the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2017 (b))
  - (b) Benefits under Section 1780 of the School Lunch Act and Child Nutrition Act of 1966, including WIC
  - (c) Payments to volunteers under the Domestic Volunteer Services Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 5044(g), 5058)
  - (d) Payments received under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1626(c))
  - (e) Income derived from certain submarginal land of the United States that is held in trust for certain Indian tribes (25 U.S.C. 459e)
  - (f) Payments or allowances made under the Department of Health and Human Services' Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (42 U.S.C. 8624(f))

- (g) Payments received under programs funded in whole or in part under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2931)
- (h) Deferred disability benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, whether received as a lump sum or in monthly prospective amounts
- (i) Income derived from the disposition of funds to the Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians (Pub. L. 94-540, 90 Stat. 2503-04)
- (j) Payments, funds, or distributions authorized, established, or directed by the Seneca Nation Settlement Act of 1990 (25 U.S.C. 1774f(b))
- (k) A lump sum or periodic payment received by an individual Indian pursuant to the Class Action Settlement Agreement in the United States District Court case entitled *Elouise Cobell et al. v. Ken Salazar et al.*, for a period of one year from the time of receipt of that payment as provided in the Claims Resolution Act of 2010
- (l) The first \$2,000 of per capita shares received from judgment funds awarded by the Indian Claims Commission or the U. S. Claims Court, the interests of individual Indians in trust or restricted lands, including the first \$2,000 per year of income received by individual Indians from funds derived from interests held in such trust or restricted lands (25 U.S.C. 1407-1408)
- (m) Benefits under the Indian Veterans Housing Opportunity Act of 2010 (only applies to Native American housing programs)
- (n) Payments received from programs funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1985 (42 U.S.C. 3056(f))
- (o) Payments received on or after January 1, 1989, from the Agent Orange Settlement Fund or any other fund established pursuant to the settlement in *In Re Agent-product liability litigation*, M.D.L. No. 381 (E.D.N.Y.)
- (p) Payments received under 38 U.S.C. 1833(c) to children of Vietnam veterans born with spinal bifida, children of women Vietnam veterans born with certain birth defects, and children of certain Korean service veterans born with spinal bifida
- (q) Payments received under the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 (25 U.S.C. 1721)
- (r) The value of any child care provided or arranged (or any amount received as payment for such care or reimbursement for costs incurred for such care) under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858q)
- (s) Earned income tax credit (EITC) refund payments received on or after January 1, 1991 (26 U.S.C. 32(j))
- (t) Payments by the Indian Claims Commission to the Confederated Tribes and Bands of Yakima Indian Nation or the Apache Tribe of Mescalero Reservation (Pub. L. 95-433)
- (u) Amounts of scholarships funded under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, including awards under federal work-study programs or under the Bureau of Indian Affairs student assistance programs (20 U.S.C. 1087uu). For Section 8 programs, the exception found in § 237 of Public Law 109-249 applies and requires that the amount of

financial assistance in excess of tuition shall be considered income in accordance with the provisions codified at 24 CFR 5.609(b)(9), except for those persons with disabilities as defined by 42 U.S.C. 1437a(b)(3)(E) (Pub. L. 109–249)

(v) Allowances, earnings and payments to AmeriCorps participants under the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12637(d))

(w) Any amount of crime victim compensation (under the Victims of Crime Act) received through crime victim assistance (or payment or reimbursement of the cost of such assistance) as determined under the Victims of Crime Act because of the commission of a crime against the applicant under the Victims of Crime Act (42 U.S.C. 10602)

(x) Any amounts in an "individual development account" as provided by the Assets for Independence Act, as amended in 2002

(y) Payments made from the proceeds of Indian tribal trust cases as described in Notice PIH 2013–30, "Exclusion from Income of Payments under Recent Tribal Trust Settlements" (25 U.S.C. 117b(a))

(z) Major disaster and emergency assistance received under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act and comparable disaster assistance provided by states, local governments, and disaster assistance organization.



## PART II: ADJUSTED INCOME

### 6-II.A. INTRODUCTION

#### Overview

HUD regulations require PHAs to deduct from annual income any of five mandatory deductions for which a family qualifies. The resulting amount is the family's adjusted income. Mandatory deductions are found in 24 CFR 5.611.

5.611(a) Mandatory deductions. In determining adjusted income, the responsible entity (PHA) must deduct the following amounts from annual income:

- (1) \$480 for each dependent;
- (2) \$400 for any elderly family or disabled family;
- (3) The sum of the following, to the extent the sum exceeds three percent of annual income:
  - (i) Unreimbursed medical expenses of any elderly family or disabled family;
  - (ii) Unreimbursed reasonable attendant care and auxiliary apparatus expenses for each member of the family who is a person with disabilities, to the extent necessary to enable any member of the family (including the member who is a person with disabilities) 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; and
- (4) Any reasonable child care expenses necessary to enable a member of the family to be employed or to further his or her education.

This part covers policies related to these mandatory deductions. Verification requirements related to these deductions are found in Chapter 7, Verifications.

#### Anticipating Expenses

##### PHA Policy

Generally, the PHA will use current circumstances to anticipate expenses. When possible, for costs that are expected to fluctuate during the year (e.g., child care during school and nonschool periods and cyclical medical expenses), the PHA will estimate costs based on historic data and known future costs.

If a family has an accumulated debt for medical or disability assistance expenses, the PHA will include as an eligible expense the portion of the debt that the family expects to pay during the period for which the income determination is being made. However, amounts previously deducted will not be allowed even if the amounts were not paid as expected in a preceding period. The PHA may require the family to provide documentation of payments made in the preceding year.

### **6-II.B. DEPENDENT DEDUCTION**

An allowance of \$480 is deducted from annual income for each dependent [24 CFR 5.611(a)(1)]. *Dependent* is defined as any family member other than the head, spouse, or cohead who is under the age of 18 or who is 18 or older and is a person with disabilities or a full-time student. Foster children, foster adults, and live-in aides are never considered dependents [24 CFR 5.603(b)].

### **6-II.C. ELDERLY OR DISABLED FAMILY DEDUCTION**

A single deduction of \$400 is taken for any elderly or disabled family [24 CFR 5.611(a)(2)]. An *elderly family* is a family whose head, spouse, cohead, or sole member is 62 years of age or older, and a *disabled family* is a family whose head, spouse, cohead, or sole member is a person with disabilities [24 CFR 5.403].

## 6-II.D. MEDICAL EXPENSES DEDUCTION [24 CFR 5.611(a)(3)(i)]

Unreimbursed medical expenses may be deducted to the extent that, in combination with any disability assistance expenses, they exceed three percent of annual income.

The medical expense deduction is permitted only for families in which the head, spouse, or cohead is at least 62 or is a person with disabilities. If a family is eligible for a medical expense deduction, the medical expenses of all family members are counted [VG, p. 28].

### Definition of *Medical Expenses*

HUD regulations define *medical expenses* at 24 CFR 5.603(b) to mean “medical expenses, including medical insurance premiums, that are anticipated during the period for which annual income is computed, and that are not covered by insurance.”

#### PHA Policy

The most current IRS Publication 502, *Medical and Dental Expenses*, will be used as a reference to determine the costs that qualify as medical expenses.

Summary of Allowable Medical Expenses from IRS Publication 502	
Services of medical professionals	Substance abuse treatment programs
Surgery and medical procedures that are necessary, legal, noncosmetic	Psychiatric treatment
Services of medical facilities	Ambulance services and some costs of transportation related to medical expenses
Hospitalization, long-term care, and in-home nursing services	The cost and care of necessary equipment related to a medical condition (e.g., eyeglasses/lenses, hearing aids, crutches, and artificial teeth)
Prescription medicines and insulin, but <u>not</u> nonprescription medicines even if recommended by a doctor	Cost and continuing care of necessary service animals
Improvements to housing directly related to medical needs (e.g., ramps for a wheel chair, handrails)	Medical insurance premiums or the cost of a health maintenance organization (HMO)
<b>Note:</b> This chart provides a summary of eligible medical expenses only. Detailed information is provided in IRS Publication 502. Medical expenses are considered only to the extent they are not reimbursed by insurance or some other source.	



## **Families That Qualify for Both Medical and Disability Assistance Expenses**

### PHA Policy

This policy applies only to families in which the head, spouse, or cohead is 62 or older or is a person with disabilities.

When expenses anticipated by a family could be defined as either medical or disability assistance expenses, the PHA will consider them medical expenses unless it is clear that the expenses are incurred exclusively to enable a person with disabilities to work.

## **6-II.E. DISABILITY ASSISTANCE EXPENSES DEDUCTION [24 CFR 5.603(b) and 24 CFR 5.611(a)(3)(ii)]**

Reasonable expenses for attendant care and auxiliary apparatus for a disabled family member may be deducted if they: (1) are necessary to enable a family member 18 years or older to work, (2) are not paid to a family member or reimbursed by an outside source, (3) in combination with any medical expenses, exceed three percent of annual income, and (4) do not exceed the earned income received by the family member who is enabled to work.

### **Earned Income Limit on the Disability Assistance Expense Deduction**

A family can qualify for the disability assistance expense deduction only if at least one family member (who may be the person with disabilities) is enabled to work [24 CFR 5.603(b)].

The disability expense deduction is capped by the amount of “earned income received by family members who are 18 years of age or older and who are able to work” because of the expense [24 CFR 5.611(a)(3)(ii)]. The earned income used for this purpose is the amount verified before any earned income disallowances or income exclusions are applied.

#### PHA Policy

The family must identify the family members enabled to work as a result of the disability assistance expenses. In evaluating the family’s request, the PHA will consider factors such as how the work schedule of the relevant family members relates to the hours of care provided, the time required for transportation, the relationship of the family members to the person with disabilities, and any special needs of the person with disabilities that might determine which family members are enabled to work.

When the PHA determines that the disability assistance expenses enable more than one family member to work, the disability assistance expenses will be capped by the sum of the family members’ incomes [PH Occ GB, p. 124].

## **Eligible Disability Expenses**

Examples of auxiliary apparatus are provided in the *PH Occupancy Guidebook* as follows: “Auxiliary apparatus: Including wheelchairs, walkers, scooters, reading devices for persons with visual disabilities, equipment added to cars and vans to permit their use by the family member with a disability, or service animals” [PH Occ GB, p. 124], but only if these items are directly related to permitting the disabled person or other family member to work [HCV GB, p. 5-30].

HUD advises PHAs to further define and describe auxiliary apparatus [VG, p. 30].

### ***Eligible Auxiliary Apparatus***

#### PHA Policy

Expenses incurred for maintaining or repairing an auxiliary apparatus are eligible. In the case of an apparatus that is specially adapted to accommodate a person with disabilities (e.g., a vehicle or computer), the cost to maintain the special adaptations (but not maintenance of the apparatus itself) is an eligible expense. The cost of service animals trained to give assistance to persons with disabilities, including the cost of acquiring the animal, veterinary care, food, grooming, and other continuing costs of care, will be included. The resident will need to supply sales receipts.

### ***Eligible Attendant Care***

The family determines the type of attendant care that is appropriate for the person with disabilities.

#### PHA Policy

Attendant care includes, but is not limited to, reasonable costs for home medical care, nursing services, in-home or center-based care services, interpreters for persons with hearing impairments, and readers for persons with visual disabilities.

Attendant care expenses will be included for the period that the person enabled to work is employed plus reasonable transportation time. The cost of general housekeeping and personal services is not an eligible attendant care expense. However, if the person enabled to work is the person with disabilities, personal services necessary to enable the person with disabilities to work are eligible.

If the care attendant also provides other services to the family, the PHA will prorate the cost and allow only that portion of the expenses attributable to attendant care that enables a family member to work. For example, if the care provider also cares for a child who is not the person with disabilities, the cost of care must be prorated. Unless otherwise specified by the care provider, the calculation will be based upon the number of hours spent in each activity and/or the number of persons under care.

### ***Payments to Family Members***

No disability expenses may be deducted for payments to a member of a tenant family [23 CFR 5.603(b)]. However, expenses paid to a relative who is not a member of the tenant family may be deducted if they are not reimbursed by an outside source.

### **Necessary and Reasonable Expenses**

The family determines the type of care or auxiliary apparatus to be provided and must describe how the expenses enable a family member to work. The family must certify that the disability assistance expenses are necessary and are not paid or reimbursed by any other source.

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA determines the reasonableness of the expenses based on typical costs of care or apparatus in the locality. To establish typical costs, the PHA will collect information from organizations that provide services and support to persons with disabilities. A family may present, and the PHA will consider, the family's justification for costs that exceed typical costs in the area.

### **Families That Qualify for Both Medical and Disability Assistance Expenses**

#### **PHA Policy**

This policy applies only to families in which the head, spouse, or cohead is 62 or older or is a person with disabilities.

When expenses anticipated by a family could be defined as either medical or disability assistance expenses, the PHA will consider them medical expenses unless it is clear that the expenses are incurred exclusively to enable a person with disabilities to work.

## **6-II.F. CHILD CARE EXPENSE DEDUCTION**

HUD defines *child care expenses* at 24 CFR 5.603(b) 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 or her education and only to the extent such amounts are not reimbursed. The amount deducted shall reflect reasonable charges for child care. In the case of child care necessary to permit employment, the amount deducted shall not exceed the amount of employment income that is included in annual income.”

Child care expenses do not include child support payments made to another on behalf of a minor who is not living in an assisted family’s household [VG, p. 26]. However, child care expenses for foster children that are living in the assisted family’s household are included when determining the family’s child care expenses.

### **Qualifying for the Deduction**

#### ***Determining Who Is Enabled to Pursue an Eligible Activity***

##### PHA Policy

The family must identify the family member(s) enabled to pursue an eligible activity. The term *eligible activity* in this section means any of the activities that may make the family eligible for a child care deduction (seeking work, pursuing an education, or being gainfully employed).

In evaluating the family’s request, the PHA will consider factors such as how the schedule for the claimed activity relates to the hours of care provided, the time required for transportation, the relationship of the family member(s) to the child, and any special needs of the child that might help determine which family member is enabled to pursue an eligible activity.

#### ***Seeking Work***

##### PHA Policy

If the child care expense being claimed is to enable a family member to seek employment, the family must provide evidence of the family member’s efforts to obtain employment at each reexamination. The deduction may be reduced or denied if the family member’s job search efforts are not commensurate with the child care expense being allowed by the PHA.

### ***Furthering Education***

#### **PHA Policy**

If the child care expense being claimed is to enable a family member to further his or her education, the member must be enrolled in school (academic or vocational) or participating in a formal training program. The family member is not required to be a full-time student, but the time spent in educational activities must be commensurate with the child care claimed.

### ***Being Gainfully Employed***

#### **PHA Policy**

If the child care expense being claimed is to enable a family member to be gainfully employed, the family must provide evidence of the family member's employment during the time that child care is being provided. Gainful employment is any legal work activity (full- or part-time) for which a family member is compensated.

## **Earned Income Limit on Child Care Expense Deduction**

When a family member looks for work or furthers his or her education, there is no cap on the amount that may be deducted for child care – although the care must still be necessary and reasonable. However, when child care enables a family member to work, the deduction is capped by “the amount of employment income that is included in annual income” [24 CFR 5.603(b)].

The earned income used for this purpose is the amount of earned income verified after any earned income disallowances or income exclusions are applied.

When the person who is enabled to work is a person who receives the earned income disallowance (EID) or a full-time student whose earned income above \$480 is excluded, child care costs related to enabling a family member to work may not exceed the portion of the person’s earned income that actually is included in annual income. For example, if a family member who qualifies for the EID makes \$15,000 but because of the EID only \$5,000 is included in annual income, child care expenses are limited to \$5,000.

The PHA must not limit the deduction to the least expensive type of child care. If the care allows the family to pursue more than one eligible activity, including work, the cap is calculated in proportion to the amount of time spent working [HCV GB, p. 5-30].

### PHA Policy

When the child care expense being claimed is to enable a family member to work, only one family member’s income will be considered for a given period of time. When more than one family member works during a given period, the PHA generally will limit allowable child care expenses to the earned income of the lowest-paid member. The family may provide information that supports a request to designate another family member as the person enabled to work.

## **Eligible Child Care Expenses**

The type of care to be provided is determined by the tenant family. The PHA may not refuse to give a family the child care expense deduction because there is an adult family member in the household that may be available to provide child care [VG, p. 26].

### ***Allowable Child Care Activities***

#### **PHA Policy**

For school-age children, costs attributable to public or private school activities during standard school hours are not considered. Expenses incurred for supervised activities after school or during school holidays (e.g., summer day camp, after-school sports league) are allowable forms of child care.

The costs of general housekeeping and personal services are not eligible. Likewise, child care expenses paid to a family member who lives in the family's unit are not eligible; however, payments for child care to relatives who do not live in the unit are eligible.

If a child care provider also renders other services to a family or child care is used to enable a family member to conduct activities that are not eligible for consideration, the PHA will prorate the costs and allow only that portion of the expenses that is attributable to child care for eligible activities. For example, if the care provider also cares for a child with disabilities who is 13 or older, the cost of care will be prorated. Unless otherwise specified by the child care provider, the calculation will be based upon the number of hours spent in each activity and/or the number of persons under care.

### ***Necessary and Reasonable Costs***

Child care expenses will be considered necessary if: (1) a family adequately explains how the care enables a family member to work, actively seek employment, or further his or her education, and (2) the family certifies, and the child care provider verifies, that the expenses are not paid or reimbursed by any other source.

#### **PHA Policy**

Child care expenses will be considered for the time required for the eligible activity plus reasonable transportation time. For child care that enables a family member to go to school, the time allowed may include not more than one study hour for each hour spent in class.

To establish the reasonableness of child care costs, the PHA will use the schedule of child care costs from the local welfare agency. Families may present, and the PHA will consider, justification for costs that exceed typical costs in the area.



## **6-II.G. PERMISSIVE DEDUCTIONS [24 CFR 5.611(b)(1)]**

Permissive deductions are additional, optional deductions that may be applied to annual income. As with mandatory deductions, permissive deductions must be based on need or family circumstance and deductions must be designed to encourage self-sufficiency or other economic purpose. If the PHA offers permissive deductions, they must be granted to all families that qualify for them and should complement existing income exclusions and deductions [PH Occ GB, p. 128].

The *Form HUD-50058 Instruction Booklet* states that the maximum allowable amount for total permissive deductions is less than \$90,000 per year.

### PHA Policy

The PHA has opted not to use permissive deductions.

## **PART III: CALCULATING RENT**

### **6-III.A. OVERVIEW OF INCOME-BASED RENT CALCULATIONS**

The first step in calculating income-based rent is to determine each family's total tenant payment (TTP). Then, if the family is occupying a unit that has tenant-paid utilities, the utility allowance is subtracted from the TTP. The result of this calculation, if a positive number, is the tenant rent. If the TTP is less than the utility allowance, the result of this calculation is a negative number, and is called the utility reimbursement, which may be paid to the family or directly to the utility company by the PHA.

#### **TTP Formula [24 CFR 5.628]**

HUD regulations specify the formula for calculating the total tenant payment (TTP) for a tenant family. TTP is the highest of the following amounts, rounded to the nearest dollar:

- 30 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income (adjusted income is defined in Part II)
- 10 percent of the family's monthly gross income (annual income, as defined in Part I, divided by 12)
- The welfare rent (in as-paid states only)
- A minimum rent between \$0 and \$50 that is established by the PHA

The PHA has authority to suspend and exempt families from minimum rent when a financial hardship exists, as defined in section 6-III.B.

#### ***Welfare Rent [24 CFR 5.628]***

##### PHA Policy

Welfare rent does not apply in this locality.

#### ***Minimum Rent [24 CFR 5.630]***

##### PHA Policy

The minimum rent for this locality is \$50. The minimum rent will be adjusted accordingly for any increases allowed by HUD.

**Optional Changes to Income-Based Rents [24 CFR 960.253(c)(2) and PH Occ GB, pp. 131-134]**

PHAs have been given very broad flexibility to establish their own, unique rent calculation systems as long as the rent produced is not higher than that calculated using the TTP and mandatory deductions. At the discretion of the PHA, rent policies may structure a system that uses combinations of permissive deductions, escrow accounts, income-based rents, and the required flat and minimum rents.

The PHA's minimum rent and rent choice policies still apply to affected families. Utility allowances are applied to PHA designed income-based rents in the same manner as they are applied to the regulatory income-based rents.

The choices are limited only by the requirement that the method used not produce a TTP or tenant rent greater than the TTP or tenant rent produced under the regulatory formula.

PHA Policy

The PHA chooses not to adopt optional changes to income-based rents.

**Ceiling Rents [24 CFR 960.253 (c)(2) and (d)]**

Ceiling rents are used to cap income-based rents. They are part of the income-based formula. If the calculated TTP exceeds the ceiling rent for the unit, the ceiling rent is used to calculate tenant rent (ceiling rent/TTP minus utility allowance). Increases in income do not affect the family since the rent is capped. The use of ceiling rents fosters upward mobility and income mixing.

Because of the mandatory use of flat rents, the primary function of ceiling rents now is to assist families who cannot switch back to flat rent between annual reexaminations and would otherwise be paying an income-based tenant rent that is higher than the flat rent.

Ceiling rents must be set to the level required for flat rents (which will require the addition of the utility allowance to the flat rent for properties with tenant-paid utilities) [PH Occ GB, p. 135].

PHA Policy

The PHA chooses not to use ceiling rents.

## **Utility Reimbursement [24 CFR 960.253(c)(3)]**

Utility reimbursement occurs when any applicable utility allowance for tenant-paid utilities exceeds the TTP. HUD permits the PHA to pay the reimbursement to the family or directly to the utility provider.

### PHA Policy

The PHA will make monthly utility reimbursements to the utility companies. The PHA will make payments in this order: 1) city water and sewer departments and 2) Xcel Energy.

When the supplier of utilities offers a “budget” or level payment plan, it shall be suggested to the resident to pay the energy bill according to this plan. This protects the resident from large seasonal fluctuations in the cost of utilities and ensures adequate heat in the winter. If the family is receiving MFIP, the PHA will encourage the family to consider a vendor payment plan for rent and utilities.

When a resident makes an application for utility service in his/her own name, he or she must sign a third party notification agreement so that the PHA will be notified if the resident fails to pay the utility bills.

If a resident or applicant is unable to have utilities connected because of a previous balance owed to the utility company, the resident/applicant may not be permitted to move into a unit with resident paid utilities. The Executive Director will make the final determination in this situation using the applicant’s credit history.

Paying the utility bills is the resident’s obligation under the lease. Failure to pay utility bills is grounds for termination of the lease.

## **6-III.B. FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS AFFECTING MINIMUM RENT [24 CFR 5.630]**

### **Overview**

If the PHA establishes a minimum rent greater than zero, the PHA must grant an exemption from the minimum rent if a family is unable to pay the minimum rent because of financial hardship.

The financial hardship exemption applies only to families required to pay the minimum rent. If a family's TTP is higher than the minimum rent, the family is not eligible for a hardship exemption. If the PHA determines that a hardship exists, the TTP is the highest of the remaining components of the family's calculated TTP.

### **HUD-Defined Financial Hardship**

Financial hardship includes the following situations:

- (1) The family has lost eligibility for or is awaiting an eligibility determination for a federal, state, or local assistance program. This includes a family member who is a noncitizen lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act who would be entitled to public benefits but for Title IV of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996.

#### PHA Policy

A hardship will be considered to exist only if the loss of eligibility has an impact on the family's ability to pay the minimum rent.

For a family waiting for a determination of eligibility, the hardship period will end as of the first of the month following (1) implementation of assistance, if approved, or (2) the decision to deny assistance. A family whose request for assistance is denied may request a hardship exemption based upon one of the other allowable hardship circumstances.

- (2) The family would be evicted because it is unable to pay the minimum rent.

#### PHA Policy

For a family to qualify under this provision, the cause of the potential eviction must be the family's failure to pay rent or tenant-paid utilities.

- (3) Family income has decreased because of changed family circumstances, including the loss of employment.

- (4) A death has occurred in the family.

PHA Policy

In order to qualify under this provision, a family must describe how the death has created a financial hardship (e.g., because of funeral-related expenses or the loss of the family member's income).

- (5) The family has experienced other circumstances determined by the PHA.

PHA Policy

The PHA has not established any additional hardship criteria.

## Implementation of Hardship Exemption

### *Determination of Hardship*

When a family requests a financial hardship exemption, the PHA must suspend the minimum rent requirement beginning the first of the month following the family's request.

The PHA then determines whether the financial hardship exists and whether the hardship is temporary or long-term.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA defines temporary hardship as a hardship expected to last 90 days or less. Long term hardship is defined as a hardship expected to last more than 90 days.

The PHA may not evict the family for nonpayment of minimum rent during the 90-day period beginning the month following the family's request for a hardship exemption.

When the minimum rent is suspended, the TTP reverts to the highest of the remaining components of the calculated TTP. The example below demonstrates the effect of the minimum rent exemption.

<b>Example: Impact of Minimum Rent Exemption</b>	
Assume the PHA has established a minimum rent of \$35.	
<b>TTP – No Hardship</b>	<b>TTP – With Hardship</b>
\$0 30% of monthly adjusted income	\$0 30% of monthly adjusted income
\$15 10% of monthly gross income	\$15 10% of monthly gross income
N/A Welfare rent	N/A Welfare rent
\$35 Minimum rent	\$35 Minimum rent
Minimum rent applies. TTP = \$35	Hardship exemption granted. TTP = \$15

#### PHA Policy

To qualify for a hardship exemption, a family must submit a request for a hardship exemption in writing. The request must explain the nature of the hardship and how the hardship has affected the family's ability to pay the minimum rent.

The PHA will make the determination of hardship within 30 calendar days.

### ***No Financial Hardship***

If the PHA determines there is no financial hardship, the PHA will reinstate the minimum rent and require the family to repay the amounts suspended.

For procedures pertaining to grievance hearing requests based upon the PHA's denial of a hardship exemption, see Chapter 14, Grievances and Appeals.

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will require the family to repay the suspended amount within 30 calendar days of the PHA's notice that a hardship exemption has not been granted.

### ***Temporary Hardship***

If the PHA determines that a qualifying financial hardship is temporary, the PHA must reinstate the minimum rent from the beginning of the first of the month following the date of the family's request for a hardship exemption.

The family must resume payment of the minimum rent and must repay the PHA the amounts suspended. HUD requires the PHA to offer a reasonable repayment agreement, on terms and conditions established by the PHA. The PHA also may determine that circumstances have changed and the hardship is now a long-term hardship.

For procedures pertaining to grievance hearing requests based upon the PHA's denial of a hardship exemption, see Chapter 14, Grievances and Appeals.

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA may enter into a repayment agreement in accordance with the PHA's repayment agreement policy (see Chapter 16).



### ***Long-Term Hardship***

If the PHA determines that the financial hardship is long-term, the PHA must exempt the family from the minimum rent requirement for so long as the hardship continues. The exemption will apply from the first of the month following the family's request until the end of the qualifying hardship. When the financial hardship has been determined to be long-term, the family is not required to repay the minimum rent.

#### **PHA Policy**

The hardship period ends when any of the following circumstances apply:

- (1) At an interim or annual reexamination, the family's calculated TTP is greater than the minimum rent.
- (2) For hardship conditions based on loss of income, the hardship condition will continue to be recognized until new sources of income are received that are at least equal to the amount lost. For example, if a hardship is approved because a family no longer receives a \$60/month child support payment, the hardship will continue to exist until the family receives at least \$60/month in income from another source or once again begins to receive the child support.
- (3) For hardship conditions based upon hardship-related expenses, the minimum rent exemption will continue to be recognized until the cumulative amount exempted is equal to the expense incurred.

### **6-III.C. UTILITY ALLOWANCES [24 CFR 965, Subpart E]**

#### **Overview**

Utility allowances are provided to families paying income-based rents when the cost of utilities is not included in the rent. When determining a family's income-based rent, the PHA must use the utility allowance applicable to the type of dwelling unit leased by the family.

For policies on establishing and updating utility allowances, see Chapter 16.

#### **Reasonable Accommodation [24 CFR 8]**

On request from a family, PHAs must approve a utility allowance that is higher than the applicable amount for the dwelling unit if a higher utility allowance is needed as a reasonable accommodation to make the program accessible to and usable by the family with a disability [PH Occ GB, p. 172].

Residents with disabilities may not be charged for the use of certain resident-supplied appliances if there is a verified need for special equipment because of the disability [PH Occ GB, p. 172].

See Chapter 2 for policies related to reasonable accommodations.

#### **Utility Allowance Revisions [24 CFR 965.507]**

The PHA must review its schedule of utility allowances each year. Between annual reviews, the PHA must revise the utility allowance schedule if there is a rate change that by itself or together with prior rate changes not adjusted for, results in a change of 10 percent or more from the rate on which such allowances were based. Adjustments to resident payments as a result of such changes must be retroactive to the first day of the month following the month in which the last rate change taken into account in such revision became effective [PH Occ GB, p. 171].

The tenant rent calculations must reflect any changes in the PHA's utility allowance schedule [24 CFR 960.253(c)(3)].

#### **PHA Policy**

Unless the PHA is required to revise utility allowances retroactively, revised utility allowances will be applied to a family's rent calculations at the first annual reexamination after the allowance is adopted.

#### **6-III.D. PRORATED RENT FOR MIXED FAMILIES [24 CFR 5.520]**

HUD regulations prohibit assistance to ineligible family members. A *mixed family* is one that includes at least one U.S. citizen or eligible immigrant and any number of ineligible family members. The PHA must prorate the assistance provided to a mixed family. The PHA will first determine TTP as if all family members were eligible and then prorate the rent based upon the number of family members that actually are eligible. To do this, the PHA must:

- (1) Subtract the TTP from the flat rent applicable to the unit. The result is the maximum subsidy for which the family could qualify if all members were eligible.
- (2) Divide the family maximum subsidy by the number of persons in the family to determine the maximum subsidy per each family member who is eligible (member maximum subsidy).
- (3) Multiply the member maximum subsidy by the number of eligible family members.
- (4) Subtract the subsidy calculated in the last step from the flat rent. This is the prorated TTP.
- (5) Subtract the utility allowance for the unit from the prorated TTP. This is the prorated rent for the mixed family.
- (6) When the mixed family's TTP is greater than the applicable flat rent, use the TTP as the prorated TTP. The prorated TTP minus the utility allowance is the prorated rent for the mixed family.

##### PHA Policy

Revised public housing flat rents will be applied to a family's rent calculation at the first annual reexamination after the revision is adopted.

## **6-III.E. FLAT RENTS AND FAMILY CHOICE IN RENTS [24 CFR 960.253]**

### **Flat Rents [24 CFR 960.253(b)]**

The flat rent is designed to encourage self-sufficiency and to avoid creating disincentives for continued residency by families who are attempting to become economically self-sufficient.

Changes in family income, expenses, or composition will not affect the flat rent amount because it is outside the income-based formula.

Policies related to the reexamination of families paying flat rent are contained in Chapter 9, and policies related to the establishment and review of flat rents are contained in Chapter 16.

### **Family Choice in Rents [24 CFR 960.253(a) and (e)]**

Once each year, the PHA must offer families the choice between a flat rent and an income-based rent. The family may not be offered this choice more than once a year. The PHA must document that flat rents were offered to families under the methods used to determine flat rents for the PHA.

#### PHA Policy

The annual PHA offer to a family of the choice between flat and income-based rent will be conducted upon admission and upon each subsequent annual reexamination.

The PHA will require families to submit their choice of flat or income-based rent in writing and will maintain such requests in the tenant file as part of the admission or annual reexamination process.

PHA flat rents will utilize comparability statistics from the Washington County Market study, Housing Link and Craig's List to establish flat rents for each unit. The analysis will include relevant factors such as age, location, condition, amenities, design and size of units as well as unassisted units for similar housing.

The PHA will also, if necessary, utilize current rental listings in local newspapers to establish reasonable market value for each unit. The analysis will include relevant factors such as age, location, condition, amenities, design and size of units.

The PHA must provide sufficient information for families to make an informed choice. This information must include the PHA's policy on switching from flat rent to income-based rent due to financial hardship and the dollar amount of the rent under each option. However, if the family chose the flat rent for the previous year the PHA is required to provide an income-based rent amount only in the year that a reexamination of income is conducted or if the family specifically requests it and submits updated income information.

### **Switching from Flat Rent to Income-Based Rent Due to Hardship [24 CFR 960.253(f)]**

A family can opt to switch from flat rent to income-based rent at any time if they are unable to pay the flat rent due to financial hardship. If the PHA determines that a financial hardship exists, the PHA must immediately allow the family to switch from flat rent to the income-based rent.

#### PHA Policy

Upon determination by the PHA that a financial hardship exists, the PHA will allow a family to switch from flat rent to income-based rent effective the first of the month following the family's written request.

Reasons for financial hardship include:

- The family has experienced a decrease in income because of changed circumstances, including loss or reduction of employment, death in the family, or reduction in or loss of earnings or other assistance
- The family has experienced an increase in expenses, because of changed circumstances, for medical costs, child care, transportation, education, or similar items
- Such other situations determined by the PHA to be appropriate

#### PHA Policy

The PHA considers payment of flat rent to be a financial hardship whenever the switch to income-based rent would be lower than the flat rent [PH Occ GB, p. 137].

### **Change in Flat Rents**

#### PHA Policy

Changes to flat rents, up or down, will not affect families paying flat rent until their next annual flat rent offer, at which time the family will be given the choice of switching back to income-based rent or of remaining on flat rent at the current (most recently adjusted) flat rent for their unit [PH Occ GB, pp. 137-138].

### **Phasing In Flat Rents [Notice PIH 2017-23; 24 CFR 960.253(b)]**

When new flat rents requirements were implemented in 2014, HUD limited the increase for existing residents paying flat rent at that time to no more than 35 percent of the current tenant rent per year. In some cases, this meant that some residents had or will have their flat rents phased-in at the time of their annual recertification. To do this, PHAs conduct a flat rent impact analysis to determine whether a phase-in is or was necessary. For families whose flat rent is being phased-in, the PHA must multiply the family's current rent amount by 1.35 and compare the result to the flat rent under the PHA's policies. Families who have subsequently been admitted to the program or have subsequently selected flat rent will not experience a phase-in.

Notice PIH 2017-23 requires that flat rents must be phased in at the full 35 percent per year. PHAs do not have the option of phasing in flat rent increases at less than 35 percent per year.

**Example:** A family was paying a flat rent of \$500 per month. At their annual recertification, the PHA has increased the flat rent for their unit size to comply with the new requirements to \$700. The PHA conducted a flat rent impact analysis as follows:  $\$500 \times 1.35 = \$675$

Since the PHA's increased flat rent of \$700 resulted in a rent increase of more than 35 percent, the PHA offered the family the choice to pay either \$675 per month or an income-based rent. The flat rent increase was phased in. At their next annual recertification in November of 2015, the PHA will again multiply the family's current flat rent by 1.35 and compare the results to the PHA's current flat rent.

### **Flat Rents and Earned Income Disallowance [A&O FAQs]**

Because the EID is a function of income-based rents, a family paying flat rent cannot qualify for the EID even if a family member experiences an event that would qualify the family for the EID. If the family later chooses to pay income-based rent, they would only qualify for the EID if a new qualifying event occurred.

Under the EID original calculation method, a family currently paying flat rent that previously qualified for the EID while paying income-based rent and is currently within their exclusion period would have the exclusion period continue while paying flat rent as long as the employment that is the subject of the exclusion continues. A family paying flat rent could therefore see a family member's exclusion period expire while the family is paying flat rent.

Under the EID revised calculation method, a family currently paying flat rent that previously qualified for the EID while paying income-based rent and is currently within their exclusion period would have the exclusion period continue while paying flat rent regardless whether the employment that is the subject of the exclusion continues. A family paying flat rent could therefore see a family member's exclusion period expire while the family is paying flat rent.

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## EXHIBIT 6-1: ANNUAL INCOME INCLUSIONS

### 24 CFR 5.609

*(a) Annual income means all amounts, monetary or not, which:*

- (1) Go to, or on behalf of, the family head or spouse (even if temporarily absent) or to any other family member; or
- (2) Are anticipated to be received from a source outside the family during the 12-month period following admission or annual reexamination effective date; and
- (3) Which are not specifically excluded in paragraph (c) of this section.
- (4) Annual income also means amounts derived (during the 12-month period) from assets to which any member of the family has access.

*(b) Annual income includes, but is not limited to:*

- (1) The full amount, before any payroll deductions, of wages and salaries, overtime pay, commissions, fees, tips and bonuses, and other compensation for personal services;
- (2) The net income from the operation of a business or profession. Expenditures for business expansion or amortization of capital indebtedness shall not be used as deductions in determining net income. An allowance for depreciation of assets used in a business or profession may be deducted, based on straight line depreciation, as provided in Internal Revenue Service regulations. Any withdrawal of cash or assets from the operation of a business or profession will be included in income, except to the extent the withdrawal is reimbursement of cash or assets invested in the operation by the family;

(3) Interest, dividends, and other net income of any kind from real or personal property. Expenditures for amortization of capital indebtedness shall not be used as deductions in determining net income. An allowance for depreciation is permitted only as authorized in paragraph (b)(2) of this section. Any withdrawal of cash or assets from an investment will be included in income, except to the extent the withdrawal is reimbursement of cash or assets invested by the family. Where the family has net family assets in excess of \$5,000, annual income shall include the greater of the actual income derived from all net family assets or a percentage of the value of such assets based on the current passbook savings rate, as determined by HUD;

(4) The full amount of periodic amounts received from Social Security, annuities, insurance policies, retirement funds, pensions, disability or death benefits, and other similar types of periodic receipts, including a lump-sum amount or prospective monthly amounts for the delayed start of a periodic amount (except as provided in paragraph (c)(14) of this section);

(5) Payments in lieu of earnings, such as unemployment and disability compensation, worker's compensation and severance pay (except as provided in paragraph (c)(3) of this section);

(6) Welfare assistance payments.

(i) Welfare assistance payments made under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program are included in annual income only to the extent such payments:

(A) Qualify as assistance under the TANF program definition at 45 CFR 260.31<sup>1</sup>; and

(B) Are not otherwise excluded under paragraph (c) of this section.

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<sup>1</sup> Text of 45 CFR 260.31 follows (next page).



(ii) If the welfare assistance payment includes an amount specifically designated for shelter and utilities that is subject to adjustment by the welfare assistance agency in accordance with the actual cost of shelter and utilities, the amount of welfare assistance income to be included as income shall consist of:

(A) The amount of the allowance or grant exclusive of the amount specifically designated for shelter or utilities; plus

(B) The maximum amount that the welfare assistance agency could in fact allow the family for shelter and utilities. If the family's welfare assistance is ratably reduced from the standard of need by applying a percentage, the amount calculated under this paragraph shall be the amount resulting from one application of the percentage.

(7) Periodic and determinable allowances, such as alimony and child support payments, and regular contributions or gifts received from organizations or from persons not residing in the dwelling;

(8) All regular pay, special pay and allowances of a member of the Armed Forces (except as provided in paragraph (c)(7) of this section)

(9) For section 8 programs only and as provided in 24 CFR 5.612, any financial assistance, in excess of amounts received for tuition, that an individual receives under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 *et seq.*), from private sources, or from an institution of higher education (as defined under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)), shall be considered income to that individual, except that financial assistance described in this paragraph is not considered annual income for persons over the age of 23 with dependent children. For purposes of this paragraph, "financial assistance" does not include loan proceeds for the purpose of determining income.

#### **HHS DEFINITION OF "ASSISTANCE"**

#### **45 CFR: GENERAL TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES**

#### **260.31 What does the term "assistance" mean?**

(a)(1) The term "assistance" includes cash, payments, vouchers, and other forms of benefits designed to meet a family's ongoing basic needs (i.e., for food, clothing, shelter, utilities, household goods, personal care items, and general incidental expenses).

(2) It includes such benefits even when they are:

(i) Provided in the form of payments by a TANF agency, or other agency on its behalf, to individual recipients; and

(ii) Conditioned on participation in work experience or community service (or any other work activity under 261.30 of this chapter).

(3) Except where excluded under paragraph (b) of this section, it also includes supportive services such as transportation and child care provided to families who are not employed.

(b) [The definition of "assistance"] excludes: (1) Nonrecurrent, short-term benefits that:

(i) Are designed to deal with a specific crisis situation or episode of need;

(ii) Are not intended to meet recurrent or ongoing needs; and

(iii) Will not extend beyond four months.

(2) Work subsidies (i.e., payments to employers or third parties to help cover the costs of employee wages, benefits, supervision, and training);

(3) Supportive services such as child care and transportation provided to families who are employed;

(4) Refundable earned income tax credits;

(5) Contributions to, and distributions from, Individual Development Accounts;

(6) Services such as counseling, case management, peer support, child care information and referral, transitional services, job retention, job advancement, and other employment-related services that do not provide basic income support; and

(7) Transportation benefits provided under a Job Access or Reverse Commute project, pursuant to section 404(k) of [the Social Security] Act, to an individual who is not otherwise receiving assistance

## EXHIBIT 6-2: ANNUAL INCOME EXCLUSIONS

### 24 CFR 5.609

*(c) Annual income does not include the following:*

- (1) Income from employment of children (including foster children) under the age of 18 years;
- (2) Payments received for the care of foster children or foster adults (usually persons with disabilities, unrelated to the tenant family, who are unable to live alone);
- (3) 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 (except as provided in paragraph (b)(5) of this section);
- (4) Amounts received by the family that are specifically for, or in reimbursement of, the cost of medical expenses for any family member;
- (5) Income of a live-in aide, as defined in Sec. 5.403;
- (6) Subject to paragraph (b)(9) of this section, the full amount of student financial assistance paid directly to the student or to the educational institution;
- (7) The special pay to a family member serving in the Armed Forces who is exposed to hostile fire;
- (8) (i) Amounts received under training programs funded by HUD;
- (ii) Amounts received by a person with a disability that are disregarded for a limited time for purposes of Supplemental Security Income eligibility and benefits because they are set aside for use under a Plan to Attain Self-Sufficiency (PASS);
- (iii) Amounts received by a participant in other publicly assisted programs which are specifically for or in reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred (special equipment, clothing, transportation, child care, etc.) and which are made solely to allow participation in a specific program;

(iv) Amounts received under a resident service stipend. A resident service stipend is a modest amount (not to exceed \$200 per month) received by a resident for performing a service for the PHA or owner, on a part-time basis, that enhances the quality of life in the development. Such services may include, but are not limited to, fire patrol, hall monitoring, lawn maintenance, resident initiatives coordination, and serving as a member of the PHA's governing board. No resident may receive more than one such stipend during the same period of time;

(v) Incremental earnings and benefits resulting to any family member from participation in qualifying State or local employment training programs (including training programs not affiliated with a local government) and training of a family member as resident management staff. Amounts excluded by this provision must be received under employment training programs with clearly defined goals and objectives, and are excluded only for the period during which the family member participates in the employment training program;

(9) Temporary, nonrecurring or sporadic income (including gifts);

(10) Reparation payments paid by a foreign government pursuant to claims filed under the laws of that government by persons who were persecuted during the Nazi era;

(11) Earnings in excess of \$480 for each full-time student 18 years old or older (excluding the head of household and spouse);

(12) Adoption assistance payments in excess of \$480 per adopted child;

(13) [Reserved]

(14) Deferred periodic amounts from supplemental security income and social security benefits that are received in a lump sum amount or in prospective monthly amounts or any deferred Department of Veterans Affairs disability benefits that are received in a lump sum amount or prospective monthly amounts.

(15) Amounts received by the family in the form of refunds or rebates under State or local law for property taxes paid on the dwelling unit;

(16) Amounts paid by a State agency to a family with a member who has a developmental disability and is living at home to offset the cost of services and equipment needed to keep the developmentally disabled family member at home; or

(17) Amounts specifically excluded by any other Federal statute from consideration as income for

purposes of determining eligibility or benefits under a category of assistance programs that includes assistance under any program to which the exclusions set forth in 24 CFR 5.609(c) apply. A notice will be published in the Federal Register and distributed to PHAs and housing owners identifying the benefits that qualify for this exclusion. Updates will be published and distributed when necessary. [See the following chart for a list of benefits that qualify for this exclusion.]

## EXHIBIT 6-3: TREATMENT OF FAMILY ASSETS

### 24 CFR 5.603(b) Net Family Assets

(1) Net cash value after deducting reasonable costs that would be incurred in disposing of real property, savings, stocks, bonds, and other forms of capital investment, excluding interests in Indian trust land and excluding equity accounts in HUD homeownership programs. The value of necessary items of personal property such as furniture and automobiles shall be excluded.

(2) In cases where a trust fund has been established and the trust is not revocable by, or under the control of, any member of the family or household, the value of the trust fund will not be considered an asset so long as the fund continues to be held in trust. Any income distributed from the trust fund shall be counted when determining annual income under Sec. 5.609.

(3) In determining net family assets, PHAs or owners, as applicable, shall include the value of any business or family assets disposed of by an applicant or tenant for less than fair market value (including a disposition in trust, but not in a foreclosure or bankruptcy sale) during the two years preceding the date of application for the program or reexamination, as applicable, in excess of the consideration received therefor. In the case of a disposition as part of a separation or divorce settlement, the disposition will not be considered to be for less than fair market value if the applicant or tenant receives important consideration not measurable in dollar terms.

(4) For purposes of determining annual income under Sec. 5.609, the term "net family assets" does not include the value of a home currently being purchased with assistance under part 982, subpart M of this title. This exclusion is limited to the first 10 years after the purchase date of the home.

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## EXHIBIT 6-4: EARNED INCOME DISALLOWANCE

### 24 CFR 960.255 Self-sufficiency incentive—Disallowance of increase in annual income.

(a) *Definitions.* The following definitions apply for purposes of this section.

*Baseline Income.* The annual income immediately prior to implementation of the disallowance described in paragraph (c)(1) of this section of a person who is a member of a qualified family.

*Disallowance.* Exclusion from annual income.

*Previously unemployed* includes a person who has earned, in the twelve months previous to employment, no more than would be received for 10 hours of work per week for 50 weeks at the established minimum wage.

*Qualified family.* A family residing in public housing:

- (i) Whose annual income increases as a result of employment of a family member who was unemployed for one or more years previous to employment;
- (ii) Whose annual income increases as a result of increased earnings by a family member during participation in any economic self-sufficiency or other job training program; or
- (iii) 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 temporary assistance for needy families funded under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act, as determined by the PHA in consultation with the local agencies administering temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) and Welfare-to-Work (WTW) programs. The TANF program is not limited to monthly income maintenance, but also includes such benefits and services as one-time payments, wage subsidies and transportation assistance—provided that the total amount over a six-month period is at least \$500.

(b) *Disallowance of increase in annual income.*

(1) *Initial twelve month exclusion.* During the 12-month period beginning on the date on which a member of a qualified family is first employed or the family first experiences an increase in annual income attributable to employment, the PHA must exclude from the annual income (defined in Statute 5.609 of this title) of a qualified family any increase in the income of the family member as a result of employment over the baseline income of that family member

(2) *Phase-in of rent increase.* Upon the expiration of the 12 month period defined in paragraph (b)(1) of this section and for the subsequent 12 month period, the PHA must exclude at least 50 percent of any increase in income of such family member as a result of employment over the family member's baseline income..

(3) *Maximum 2-year disallowance.* The disallowance of increased income of an individual family member as provided in paragraph (b)(1) or (b)(2) of this section is limited to a lifetime 24-month period. It applies for a maximum of twelve months for disallowance under paragraph (b)(1) and a maximum of twelve months for disallowance under paragraph (b)(2), during the 24 month period starting from the initial exclusion under paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

(4) *Effect of changes on currently participating families.* Families eligible for and participating in the disallowance of earned income under this section prior to May 9, 2016 will continue to be governed by this section in effect as it existed immediately prior to that date.

(c) *Inapplicability to admission.* The disallowance of increases in income as a result of employment under this section does not apply for purposes of admission to the program (including the determination of income eligibility and income targeting).

(d) *Individual Savings Accounts*. As an alternative to the disallowance of increases in income as a result of employment described in paragraph (b) of this section, a PHA may choose to provide for individual savings accounts for public housing residents who pay an income-based rent, in accordance with a written policy, which must include the following provisions:

(1) The PHA must advise the family that the savings account option is available;

(2) At the option of the family, the PHA must deposit in the savings account the total amount that would have been included in tenant rent payable to the PHA as a result of increased income that is disallowed in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section;

(3) Amounts deposited in a savings account may be withdrawn only for the purpose of:

(i) Purchasing a home;

(ii) Paying education costs of family members;

(iii) Moving out of public or assisted housing; or

(iv) Paying any other expense authorized by the PHA for the purpose of promoting the economic self-sufficiency of residents of public housing;

(4) The PHA must maintain the account in an interest bearing investment and must credit the family with the net interest income, and the PHA may not charge a fee for maintaining the account;

(5) At least annually the PHA must provide the family with a report on the status of the account; and

(6) If the family moves out of public housing, the PHA shall pay the tenant any balance in the account, minus any amounts owed to the PHA

## EXHIBIT 6-5: THE EFFECT OF WELFARE BENEFIT REDUCTION

### 24 CFR 5.615

#### **Public housing program and Section 8 tenant-based assistance program: How welfare benefit reduction affects family income.**

**(a) Applicability.** This section applies to covered families who reside in public housing (part 960 of this title) or receive Section 8 tenant-based assistance (part 982 of this title).

**(b) Definitions.** The following definitions apply for purposes of this section:

*Covered families.* Families who receive welfare assistance or other public assistance benefits ("welfare benefits") from a State or other public agency ("welfare agency") under a program for which Federal, State, or local law requires that a member of the family must participate in an economic self-sufficiency program as a condition for such assistance.

*Economic self-sufficiency program.* See definition at Sec. 5.603.

*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 nonetheless included in the family's annual income for purposes of determining rent.

*Specified welfare benefit reduction.*

(1) A reduction of welfare benefits by the welfare agency, in whole or in part, for a family member, as determined by the welfare agency, because of fraud by a family member in connection with the welfare program; or because of welfare agency sanction against a family member for noncompliance with a welfare agency requirement to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program.

(2) "Specified welfare benefit reduction" does not include a reduction or termination of welfare benefits by the welfare agency:

(i) at expiration of a lifetime or other time limit on the payment of welfare benefits;

(ii) because a family member is not able to obtain employment, even though the family member has complied with welfare agency economic self-sufficiency or work activities requirements; or

(iii) because a family member has not complied with other welfare agency requirements.

**(c) Imputed welfare income.**

(1) A family's annual income includes the amount of imputed welfare income (because of a specified welfare benefits reduction, as specified in notice to the PHA by the welfare agency), plus the total amount of other annual income as determined in accordance with Sec. 5.609.

(2) At the request of the PHA, the welfare agency will inform the PHA in writing of the amount and term of any specified welfare benefit reduction for a family member, and the reason for such reduction, and will also inform the PHA of any subsequent changes in the term or amount of such specified welfare benefit reduction. The PHA will use this information to determine the amount of imputed welfare income for a family.

(3) A family's annual income includes imputed welfare income in family annual income, as determined at the PHA's interim or regular reexamination of family income and composition, during the term of the welfare benefits reduction (as specified in information provided to the PHA by the welfare agency).



(4) The amount of the imputed welfare income is offset by the amount of additional income a family receives that commences after the time the sanction was imposed. When such additional income from other sources is at least equal to the imputed

(5) The PHA may not include imputed welfare income in annual income if the family was not an assisted resident at the time of sanction.

*(d) Review of PHA decision.*

(1) Public housing. If a public housing tenant claims that the PHA has not correctly calculated the amount of imputed welfare income in accordance with HUD requirements, and if the PHA denies the family's request to modify such amount, the PHA shall give the tenant written notice of such denial, with a brief explanation of the basis for the PHA determination of the amount of imputed welfare income. The PHA notice shall also state that if the tenant does not agree with the PHA determination, the tenant may request a grievance hearing in accordance with part 966, subpart B of this title to review the PHA determination. The tenant is not required to pay an escrow deposit pursuant to Sec. 966.55(e) for the portion of tenant rent attributable to the imputed welfare income in order to obtain a grievance hearing on the PHA determination.

(2) Section 8 participant. A participant in the Section 8 tenant-based assistance program may request an informal hearing, in accordance with Sec. 982.555 of this title, to review the PHA determination of the amount of imputed welfare income that must be included in the family's annual income in accordance with this section. If the family claims that such amount is not correctly calculated in accordance with HUD requirements, and if the PHA denies the family's request to modify such amount, the PHA shall give the family written notice of such denial, with a brief explanation of the basis for the PHA determination

of the amount of imputed welfare income. Such notice shall also state that if the family does not agree with the PHA determination, the family may request an informal hearing on the determination under the PHA hearing procedure.

*(e) PHA relation with welfare agency.*

(1) The PHA must ask welfare agencies to inform the PHA of any specified welfare benefits reduction for a family member, the reason for such reduction, the term of any such reduction, and any subsequent welfare agency determination affecting the amount or term of a specified welfare benefits reduction. If the welfare agency determines a specified welfare benefits reduction for a family member, and gives the PHA written notice of such reduction, the family's annual incomes shall include the imputed welfare income because of the specified welfare benefits reduction.

(2) The PHA is responsible for determining the amount of imputed welfare income that is included in the family's annual income as a result of a specified welfare benefits reduction as determined by the welfare agency, and specified in the notice by the welfare agency to the PHA. However, the PHA is not responsible for determining whether a reduction of welfare benefits by the welfare agency was correctly determined by the welfare agency in accordance with welfare program requirements and procedures, nor for providing the opportunity for review or hearing on such welfare agency determinations.

(3) Such welfare agency determinations are the responsibility of the welfare agency, and the family may seek appeal of such determinations through the welfare agency's normal due process procedures. The PHA shall be entitled to rely on the welfare agency notice to the PHA of the welfare agency's determination of a specified welfare benefits reduction.

## **Chapter 7**

### **VERIFICATION**

[24 CFR 960.259, 24 CFR 5.230, Notice PIH 2017-12]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The PHA must verify all information that is used to establish the family's eligibility and level of assistance and is required to obtain written authorization from the family in order to collect the information. Applicants and program participants must cooperate with the verification process as a condition of receiving assistance. The PHA must not pass on the cost of verification to the family.

The PHA will follow the verification guidance provided by HUD in Notice PIH 2017-12 and any subsequent guidance issued by HUD. This chapter summarizes those requirements and provides supplementary PHA policies.

Part I describes the general verification process. Part II provides more detailed requirements related to family information. Part III provides information on income and assets, and Part IV covers mandatory deductions.

Verification policies, rules and procedures will be modified as needed to accommodate persons with disabilities. All information obtained through the verification process will be handled in accordance with the records management policies established by the PHA.

#### **PART I: GENERAL VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

##### **7-I.A. FAMILY CONSENT TO RELEASE OF INFORMATION**

**[24 CFR 960.259, 24 CFR 5.230]**

The family must supply any information that the PHA or HUD determines is necessary to the administration of the program and must consent to PHA verification of that information [24 CFR 960.259(a)(1)].

##### **Consent Forms**

It is required that all adult applicants and tenants sign form HUD-9886, Authorization for Release of Information. The purpose of form HUD-9886 is to facilitate automated data collection and computer matching from specific sources and provides the family's consent only for the specific purposes listed on the form. HUD and the PHA may collect information from State Wage Information Collection Agencies (SWICAs) and current and former employers of adult family members. Only HUD is authorized to collect information directly from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA). Adult family members must sign other consent forms as needed to collect information relevant to the family's eligibility and level of assistance.

##### **Penalties for Failing to Consent [24 CFR 5.232]**

If any family member who is required to sign a consent form fails to do so, the PHA will deny admission to applicants and terminate the lease of tenants. The family may request a hearing in accordance with the PHA's grievance procedures.

## **7-I.B. OVERVIEW OF VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

### **HUD's Verification Hierarchy [Notice PIH 2017-12]**

HUD mandates the use of the EIV system and offers administrative guidance on the use of other methods to verify family information and specifies the circumstances in which each method will be used. In general, HUD requires the PHA to use the most reliable form of verification that is available and to document the reasons when the PHA uses a lesser form of verification.

In order of priority, the forms of verification that the PHA will use are:

- Up-front Income Verification (UIV) using HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system
- Up-front Income Verification (UIV) using a non-HUD system
- Written Third Party Verification (may be provided by applicant or resident)
- Written Third-party Verification Form
- Oral Third-party Verification
- Self-Certification

Each of the verification methods is discussed in subsequent sections below.

### **Requirements for Acceptable Documents**

#### PHA Policy

Any documents used for verification must be the original (not photocopies) and generally must be dated within 60 days of the date they are provided to the PHA. The documents must not be damaged, altered or in any way illegible.

Print-outs from web pages are considered original documents.

The PHA staff member who views the original document must make a photocopy, annotate the copy with the name of the person who provided the document and the date the original was viewed, and sign the copy.

Any family self-certifications must be made in a format acceptable to the PHA and must be signed in the presence of a PHA representative or notary public.

## **File Documentation**

The PHA must document in the file how the figures used in income and rent calculations were determined. All verification attempts, information obtained, and decisions reached during the verification process will be recorded in the family's file in sufficient detail to demonstrate that the PHA has followed all of the verification policies set forth in this ACOP. The record should be sufficient to enable a staff member or HUD reviewer to understand the process followed and conclusions reached.

### PHA Policy

The PHA will document, in the family file, the following:

- Reported family annual income

- Value of assets

- Expenses related to deductions from annual income

- Other factors influencing the adjusted income or income-based rent determination

When the PHA is unable to obtain third-party verification, the PHA will document in the family file the reason that third-party verification was not available [24 CFR 960.259(c)(1); Notice PIH 2017-12].

## **7-I.C. UP-FRONT INCOME VERIFICATION (UIV)**

Up-front income verification (UIV) refers to the PHA's use of the verification tools available from independent sources that maintain computerized information about earnings and benefits. UIV will be used to the extent that these systems are available to the PHA.

There may be legitimate differences between the information provided by the family and UIV-generated information. If the family disputes the accuracy of UIV data, no adverse action can be taken until the PHA has independently verified the UIV information and the family has been granted the opportunity to contest any adverse findings through the PHA's informal review/hearing processes. (For more on UIV and income projection, see section 6-I.C.)

### **Upfront Income Verification Using HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System (Mandatory)**

PHAs must use HUD's EIV system in its entirety as a third-party source to verify tenant employment and income information during mandatory reexaminations or recertifications of family composition and income in accordance with 24 CFR 5.236 and administrative guidance issued by HUD. HUD's EIV system contains data showing earned income, unemployment benefits, social security benefits, and SSI benefits for participant families. The following policies apply to the use of HUD's EIV system.

#### ***EIV Income Reports***

The data shown on income reports is updated quarterly. Data may be between three and six months old at the time reports are generated.

##### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will obtain income reports for annual reexaminations on a monthly basis. Reports will be generated as part of the regular reexamination process.

Income reports will be compared to family-provided information as part of the annual reexamination process. Income reports may be used in the calculation of annual income, as described in Chapter 6.I.C. Income reports may also be used to meet the regulatory requirement for third party verification, as described above. Policies for resolving discrepancies between income reports and family-provided information will be resolved as described in Chapter 6.I.C. and in this chapter.

Income reports will be used in interim reexaminations to identify any discrepancies between reported income and income shown in the EIV system, and as necessary to verify earned income, and to verify and calculate unemployment benefits, Social Security and/or SSI benefits. EIV will also be used to verify that families claiming zero income are not receiving income from any of these sources.

Income reports will be retained in resident files with the applicable annual or interim reexamination documents.

When the PHA determines through income reports and third-party verification that a family has concealed or under-reported income, corrective action will be taken pursuant to the policies in Chapter 15, Program Integrity.

### ***EIV Identity Verification***

The EIV system verifies resident identities against Social Security Administration (SSA) records. These records are compared to Public and Indian Housing Information Center (PIC) data for a match on social security number, name, and date of birth.

PHAs are required to use EIV's *Identity Verification Report* on a monthly basis to improve the availability of income information in EIV [Notice PIH 2017-12].

When identity verification for a resident fails, a message will be displayed within the EIV system and no income information will be displayed.

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will identify residents whose identity verification has failed by reviewing EIV's *Identity Verification Report* on a monthly basis. The PHA will attempt to resolve PIC/SSA discrepancies by obtaining appropriate documentation from the tenant. When the PHA determines that discrepancies exist as a result of PHA errors, such as spelling errors or incorrect birth dates, it will correct the errors promptly.

### **Upfront Income Verification Using Non-HUD Systems (Optional)**

In addition to mandatory use of the EIV system, HUD encourages PHAs to utilize other upfront verification sources.

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will inform all applicants and residents of its use of the following UIV resources during the admission and reexamination process:

HUD's EIV system

The Work Number

## **7-I.D. THIRD-PARTY WRITTEN AND ORAL VERIFICATION**

HUD's current verification hierarchy defines two types of written third-party verification. The more preferable form, "written third-party verification," consists of an original document generated by a third-party source, which may be received directly from a third-party source or provided to the PHA by the family. If written third-party verification is not available, the PHA must attempt to obtain a "written third-party verification form." This is a standardized form used to collect information from a third party.

### **Written Third-Party Verification [Notice PIH 2017-12]**

Written third-party verification documents must be original and authentic and may be supplied by the family or received from a third-party source.

Examples of acceptable tenant-provided documents include, but are not limited to: pay stubs, payroll summary reports, employer notice or letters of hire and termination, SSA benefit verification letters, bank statements, child support payment stubs, welfare benefit letters and/or printouts, and unemployment monetary benefit notices.

The PHA is required to obtain, at minimum, two current and consecutive pay stubs for determining annual income from wages.

The PHA may reject documentation provided by the family if the document is not an original, if the document appears to be forged, or if the document is altered, mutilated, or illegible.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will require that the family provide the most recent tax documents for each adult annually.

Third-party documents provided by the family must be dated generally within 60 days of the PHA request date.

If the PHA determines that third-party documents provided by the family are not acceptable, the PHA will explain the reason to the family and request additional documentation.

As verification of earned income, the PHA will require the family to provide the two most current, consecutive pay stubs.

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

When upfront verification is not available and the family is unable to provide written third-party documents, the PHA must request a written third-party verification form. HUD's position is that this traditional third-party verification method presents administrative burdens and risks which may be reduced through the use of family-provided third-party documents.

PHAs may mail, fax, or e-mail third-party written verification form requests to third-party sources.

### PHA Policy

The PHA will send third-party verification forms directly to the third party.

Third-party verification forms will be sent when third-party verification documents are unavailable or are rejected by the PHA.

## **Oral Third-Party Verification [Notice PIH 2017-12]**

For third-party oral verification, PHAs contact sources, identified by UIV techniques or by the family, by telephone or in person.

Oral third-party verification is mandatory if neither form of written third-party verification is available.

Third-party oral verification may be used when requests for written third-party verification forms have not been returned within a reasonable time—e.g., 10 business days.

PHAs should document in the file the date and time of the telephone call or visit, the name of the person contacted, the telephone number, as well as the information confirmed.

### PHA Policy

In collecting third-party oral verification, PHA staff will record in the family's file the name and title of the person contacted, the date and time of the conversation (or attempt), the telephone number used, and the facts provided.

When any source responds verbally to the initial written request for verification the PHA will accept the verbal response as oral verification but will also request that the source complete and return any verification forms that were provided.



### **When Third-Party Verification is Not Required [Notice PIH 2017-12]**

Third-party verification may not be available in all situations. HUD has acknowledged that it may not be cost-effective or reasonable to obtain third-party verification of income, assets, or expenses when these items would have a minimal impact on the family's total tenant payment.

#### PHA Policy

If the family cannot provide original documents, the PHA will pay the service charge required to obtain third-party verification, unless it is not cost effective in which case a self-certification will be acceptable as the only means of verification. The cost of verification will not be passed on to the family.

The cost of postage and envelopes to obtain third-party verification of income, assets, and expenses is not an unreasonable cost [VG, p. 18].

### ***Primary Documents***

Third-party verification is not required when legal documents are the primary source, such as a birth certificate or other legal documentation of birth.

### ***Imputed Assets***

The PHA may accept a self-certification from the family as verification of assets disposed of for less than fair market value [HCV GB, p. 5-28].

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will accept a self-certification from a family as verification of assets disposed of for less than fair market value [HCV GB, p. 5-28].

### **Value of Assets and Asset Income [24 CFR 960.259]**

For families with net assets totaling \$50,000 or less, the PHA may accept the family's declaration of asset value and anticipated asset income. However, the PHA is required to obtain third-party verification of all assets regardless of the amount during the intake process, whenever a family member is added and at least every three years thereafter.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will require third-party verification of assets at initial intake, whenever a family member is added. At annual recertifications, for families with net assets totaling \$50,000 or less, the PHA will accept the family's declaration of asset value and exclude the asset interest income on assets up to \$50,000. At annual recertification, the PHA will obtain third-party verification of all assets regardless of amount at least every three years thereafter.

## **7-I.E. SELF-CERTIFICATION**

When HUD requires third-party verification, self-certification, or “tenant declaration,” is used as a last resort when the PHA is unable to obtain third-party verification.

Self –certification, however, is an acceptable form of verification when:

- A source of income is fully excluded
- The PHA has adopted a policy to implement streamlines annual recertification for fixed sources of income (See Chapter 9)

When the PHA was required to obtain third-party verification but instead relies on a tenant declaration for verification of income, assets, or expenses, the family’s file must be documented to explain why third-party verification was not available.

### PHA Policy

When information cannot be verified by a third party or by review of documents, family members will be required to submit self-certifications attesting to the accuracy of the information they have provided to the PHA.

The PHA may require a family to certify that a family member does not receive a particular type of income or benefit.

The self-certification must be made in a format acceptable to the PHA and must be signed by the family member whose information or status is being verified. All self-certifications must be signed in the presence of a PHA representative or notary public.



## **PART II: VERIFYING FAMILY INFORMATION**

### **7-II.A. VERIFICATION OF LEGAL IDENTITY**

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will require families to furnish verification of legal identity for each household member.

<b>Verification of Legal Identity for Adults</b>	<b>Verification of Legal Identity for Children</b>
Certificate of birth, naturalization papers Church issued baptismal certificate Current, valid driver's license or Department of Motor Vehicle identification card U.S. military discharge (DD 214) Current U.S. passport Current employer identification card	Certificate of birth Adoption papers Custody agreement Health and Human Services ID Certified school records

If a document submitted by a family is illegible for any reason or otherwise questionable, more than one of these documents may be required.

If none of these documents can be provided and at the PHA's discretion, a third party who knows the person may attest to the person's identity. The certification must be provided in a format acceptable to the PHA and be signed in the presence of a PHA representative or notary public.

Legal identity will be verified for all applicants at the time of eligibility determination and in cases where the PHA has reason to doubt the identity of a person representing him or herself to be a tenant or a member of a tenant family.

## **7-II.B. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS [24 CFR 5.216 and Notice PIH 2012-10]**

The family must provide documentation of a valid social security number (SSN) for each member of the household, with the exception of individuals who do not contend eligible immigration status. Exemptions also include, existing residents who were at least 62 years of age as of January 31, 2010, and had not previously disclosed an SSN.

The PHA must accept the following documentation as acceptable evidence of the social security number:

- An original SSN card issued by the Social Security Administration (SSA)
- An original SSA-issued document, which contains the name and SSN of the individual
- An original document issued by a federal, state, or local government agency, which contains the name and SSN of the individual

The PHA may only reject documentation of an SSN provided by an applicant or resident if the document is not an original document, if the original document has been altered, mutilated, is illegible, or if the document appears to be forged.

### PHA Policy

The PHA will explain to the applicant or resident the reasons the document is not acceptable and request that the individual obtain and submit acceptable documentation of the SSN to the PHA within 90 days.

If an applicant family includes a child under 6 years of age who joined the household within the 6 months prior to the date of program admission, an otherwise eligible family may be admitted and must provide documentation of the child's SSN within 90 days. A 90 day extension will be granted if the PHA determines that the resident's failure to comply was due to unforeseen circumstances and was outside resident's control.

### PHA Policy

The PHA will grant one additional 90 day extension if needed for reasons beyond the applicant's control, such as delayed processing of the SSN application by the SSA, natural disaster, fire, death in the family, or other emergency.

When a resident requests to add a new household member the resident must provide the complete and accurate SSN assigned to each new member at the time of reexamination or recertification, in addition to the documentation required to verify it. The PHA may not add the new household member until such documentation is provided.

When a resident requests to add a new household member, the resident must provide the SSN assigned to each new child and the required documentation within 90 calendar days of the child being added to the household. A 90-day extension will be granted if the PHA determines that the resident's failure to comply was due to unforeseen circumstances and was outside of the resident's control. During the period the PHA is awaiting documentation of the SSN, the child will be counted as part of the assisted household.

### PHA Policy

The PHA will grant one additional 90-day extension if needed for reasons beyond the resident's control such as delayed processing of the SSN application by the SSA, natural disaster, fire, death in the family, or other emergency.

Social security numbers must be verified only once during continuously-assisted occupancy.

### PHA Policy

The PHA will verify each disclosed SSN by:

- Obtaining documentation from applicants and residents that is acceptable as evidence of social security numbers

- Making a copy of the original documentation submitted, returning it to the individual, and retaining a copy in the file folder

Once the individual's verification status is classified as "verified," the PHA may, at its discretion, remove and destroy copies of documentation accepted as evidence of social security numbers. The retention of the EIV Summary Report or Income Report is adequate documentation of an individual's SSN.

### PHA Policy

Once an individual's status is classified as "verified" in HUD's EIV system, the PHA may remove and destroy copies of documentation accepted as evidence of social security numbers.

## **7-II.C. DOCUMENTATION OF AGE**

A birth certificate or other official record of birth is the preferred form of age verification for all family members. For elderly family members an original document that provides evidence of the receipt of social security retirement benefits is acceptable.

### PHA Policy

If an official record of birth or evidence of social security retirement benefits cannot be provided, the PHA will require the family to submit other documents that support the reported age of the family member (e.g., school records, driver's license if birth year is recorded) and to provide a self-certification.

Age must be verified only once during continuously-assisted occupancy.

## **7-II.D. FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

Applicants and tenants are required to identify the relationship of each household member to the head of household. Definitions of the primary household relationships are provided in the Eligibility chapter.

### PHA Policy

Family relationships are verified only to the extent necessary to determine a family's eligibility and level of assistance. Certification by the head of household normally is sufficient verification of family relationships.

## **Marriage**

### PHA Policy

Certification by the head of household is normally sufficient verification. If the PHA has reasonable doubts about a marital relationship, the PHA will require the family to document the marriage with a marriage certificate or other documentation to verify that the couple is married.

In the case of a common law marriage, the couple must demonstrate that they hold themselves to be married (e.g., by telling the community they are married, calling each other husband and wife, using the same last name, filing joint income tax returns).

## **Separation or Divorce**

### PHA Policy

Certification by the head of household is normally sufficient verification. If the PHA has reasonable doubts about a divorce or separation, the PHA will require the family to provide documentation of the divorce or separation with a certified copy of a divorce decree, signed by a court officer; a copy of a court-ordered maintenance or other court record; or other documentation that shows a couple is divorced or separated.

If no court document is available, documentation from a community-based agency will be accepted.

## **Absence of Adult Member**

### PHA Policy

If an adult member who was formerly a member of the household is reported to be permanently absent, the family must provide evidence to support that the person is no longer a member of the family (e.g., documentation of another address at which the person resides such as a lease or utility bill).

## **Foster Children and Foster Adults**

### PHA Policy

Third-party verification from the state or local government agency responsible for the placement of the individual with the family is required.

## **7-II.E. VERIFICATION OF STUDENT STATUS**

### PHA Policy

The PHA requires families to provide information about the student status of all students who are 18 years of age or older. This information will be verified only if:

- The family claims full-time student status for an adult other than the head, spouse, or cohead, or

- The family claims a child care deduction to enable a family member to further his or her education.



## **7-II.F. DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITY**

The PHA must verify the existence of a disability in order to allow certain income disallowances and deductions from income. The PHA is not permitted to inquire about the nature or extent of a person's disability [24 CFR 100.202(c)]. The PHA may not inquire about a person's diagnosis or details of treatment for a disability or medical condition. If the PHA receives a verification document that provides such information, the PHA will not place this information in the tenant file. Under no circumstances will the PHA request a resident's medical record(s). For more information on health care privacy laws, see the Department of Health and Human Services' Web site at [www.os.dhhs.gov](http://www.os.dhhs.gov).

The PHA may make the following inquiries, provided it makes them of all applicants, whether or not they are persons with disabilities [VG, p. 24]:

- Inquiry into an applicant's ability to meet the requirements of ownership or tenancy
- Inquiry to determine whether an applicant is qualified for a dwelling available only to persons with disabilities or to persons with a particular type of disability
- Inquiry to determine whether an applicant for a dwelling is qualified for a priority available to persons with disabilities or to persons with a particular type of disability
- Inquiry about whether an applicant for a dwelling is a current illegal abuser or addict of a controlled substance
- Inquiry about whether an applicant has been convicted of the illegal manufacture or distribution of a controlled substance

### **Family Members Receiving SSA Disability Benefits**

Verification of receipt of disability benefits from the Social Security Administration (SSA) is sufficient for verification of disability for the purpose of qualification for waiting list preferences or certain income disallowances and deductions [VG, p. 23].

#### PHA Policy

For family members claiming disability who receive disability payments from the SSA, the PHA will attempt to obtain information about disability benefits through HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system. If documentation is not available through HUD's EIV system, the PHA will request a current (dated within the last 120 days) SSA benefit verification letter from each family member claiming disability status. If a family member is unable to provide the document, the PHA will ask the family to obtain a benefit verification letter either by calling SSA at 1-800-772-1213 or by requesting one from [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov). Once the family receives the benefit verification letter, it will be required to provide the letter to the PHA.

## **Family Members Not Receiving SSA Disability Benefits**

Receipt of veteran's disability benefits, worker's compensation, or other non-SSA benefits based on the individual's claimed disability are not sufficient verification that the individual meets HUD's definition of disability in 24 CFR 5.403, necessary to qualify for waiting list preferences or certain income disallowances and deductions.

### **PHA Policy**

For family members claiming disability who do not receive SSI or other disability payments from the SSA, a knowledgeable professional must provide third-party verification that the family member meets the HUD definition of disability. See the Eligibility chapter for the HUD definition of disability. The knowledgeable professional will verify whether the family member does or does not meet the HUD definition.

## **7-II.G. CITIZENSHIP OR ELIGIBLE IMMIGRATION STATUS [24 CFR 5.508]**

### **Overview**

Housing assistance is not available to persons who are not citizens, nationals, or eligible immigrants. Prorated assistance is provided for "mixed families" containing both eligible and ineligible persons. See the Eligibility chapter for detailed discussion of eligibility requirements. This chapter (7) discusses HUD and PHA verification requirements related to citizenship status.

The family must provide a certification that identifies each family member as a U.S. citizen, a U.S. national, an eligible noncitizen or an ineligible noncitizen and submit the documents discussed below for each family member. Once eligibility to receive assistance has been verified for an individual it need not be collected or verified again during continuously-assisted occupancy [24 CFR 5.508(g)(5)]

### **U.S. Citizens and Nationals**

HUD requires a declaration for each family member who claims to be a U.S. citizen or national. The declaration must be signed personally by any family member 18 or older and by a guardian for minors.

The PHA may request verification of the declaration by requiring presentation of a birth certificate, United States passport or other appropriate documentation.

### **PHA Policy**

Family members who claim U.S. citizenship or national status will not be required to provide additional documentation unless the PHA receives information indicating that an individual's declaration may not be accurate.

## **Eligible Immigrants**

### ***Documents Required***

All family members claiming eligible immigration status must declare their status in the same manner as U.S. citizens and nationals.

The documentation required for eligible noncitizens varies depending upon factors such as the date the person entered the U.S., the conditions under which eligible immigration status has been granted, age, and the date on which the family began receiving HUD-funded assistance. Exhibit 7-1 at the end of this chapter summarizes documents family members must provide.

### ***PHA Verification*** [HCV GB, pp 5-3 and 5-7]

For family members age 62 or older who claim to be eligible immigrants, proof of age is required in the manner described in 7-II.C. of this ACOP. No further verification of eligible immigration status is required.

For family members under the age of 62 who claim to be eligible immigrants, the PHA must verify immigration status with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

The PHA will follow all USCIS protocols for verification of eligible immigration status.

## **7-II.H. VERIFICATION OF PREFERENCE STATUS**

The PHA must verify any preferences claimed by an applicant that determined his or her placement on the waiting list.

### **PHA Policy**

The PHA offers a preference for families living or working in Washington County, described in Section 4-III.B.

The PHA may verify that the family qualifies for this preference based on the family's submission of the working member's most recent paycheck stub indicating that the working member works in Washington County. The paycheck stub must have been issued to the working member within the last thirty days.

The PHA may also seek third party verification from the employer of the head, spouse, cohead or sole member of a family requesting a preference as employed in Washington County

## **PART III: VERIFYING INCOME AND ASSETS**

Chapter 6, Part I of this ACOP describes in detail the types of income that are included and excluded and how assets and income from assets are handled. Any assets and income reported by the family must be verified. This part provides PHA policies that supplement the general verification procedures specified in Part I of this chapter.

### **7-III.A. EARNED INCOME**

#### **Tips**

##### PHA Policy

Unless tip income is included in a family member's W-2 by the employer, persons who work in industries where tips are standard will be required to sign a certified estimate of tips received for the prior year and tips anticipated to be received in the coming year.

#### **Wages**

##### PHA Policy

For wages other than tips, the family must provide originals of the two most current, consecutive pay stubs.

### **7-III.B. BUSINESS AND SELF EMPLOYMENT INCOME**

##### PHA Policy

Business owners and self-employed persons will be required to provide:

An audited financial statement for the previous fiscal year if an audit was conducted. If an audit was not conducted, a statement of income and expenses must be submitted and the business owner or self-employed person must certify to its accuracy.

All schedules completed for filing federal and local taxes in the preceding year. For self-employed and business owners, the rent calculation will be based upon the prior year's tax forms. Unless it is a permanent change in income such as phasing out of self-employment or shutting down of the business, no interim rent changes will be processed. Proof of phasing out of self-employment or closing of a business would be a written public notice to current customers with a specific ending date.

If accelerated depreciation was used on the tax return or financial statement, an accountant's calculation of depreciation expense, computed using straight-line depreciation rules.

The PHA will provide a format for any person who is unable to provide such a statement to record income and expenses for the coming year. The business owner/self-employed person will be required to submit the information requested and to certify to its accuracy at all future reexaminations.

At any reexamination the PHA may request documents that support submitted financial statements such as manifests, appointment books, cash books, or bank statements.

If a family member has been self-employed less than three (3) months, the PHA will accept the family member's certified estimate of income and schedule an interim reexamination in three (3) months. If the family member has been self-employed for three (3) to twelve (12) months the PHA will require the family to provide documentation of income and expenses for this period and use that information to project income.

### **7-III.C. PERIODIC PAYMENTS AND PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF EARNINGS**

For policies governing streamlined income determinations for fixed source of income, please see Chapter 9.

#### **Social Security/SSI Benefits**

##### PHA Policy

To verify the SS/SSI benefits of applicants, the PHA will request a current (dated within the last 120 days) SSA benefit verification letter from each family member who receives social security benefits. If a family member is unable to provide the document, the PHA will help the applicant request a benefit verification letter from SSA's Web site at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) or ask the family to request one by calling SSA at 1-800-772-1213. Once the family has received the original benefit verification letter, it will be required to provide the letter to the PHA.

To verify the SS/SSI benefits of residents, the PHA will obtain information about social security/SSI benefits through HUD's EIV system, and confirm with the resident(s) that the current listed benefit amount is correct. If the resident disputes the EIV-reported benefit amount, or if benefit information is not available in HUD systems, the PHA will request a current SSA benefit verification letter from each family member that receives social security benefits. If a family member is unable to provide the document, the PHA will help the resident request a benefit verification letter from SSA's Web site at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) or ask the family to request one by calling SSA at 1-800-772-1213. Once the family has received the benefit verification letter, it will be required to provide the letter to the PHA.

## 7-III.D. ALIMONY OR CHILD SUPPORT

### PHA Policy

The methods the PHA will use to verify alimony and child support payments differ depending on whether the family declares that it receives regular payments.

If the family declares that it *receives regular payments*, verification will be obtained in the following order of priority:

Copy of on-line statement of child support received in past year.

Copies of the receipts and/or payment stubs for the past year prior to PHA request

Third-party verification form from the state or local child support enforcement agency

Third-party verification form from the person paying the support

Family's self-certification of amount received

If the family declares that it *receives irregular or no payments*, in addition to the verification process listed above, the family must provide evidence that it has taken all reasonable efforts to collect amounts due. This may include:

A statement from any agency responsible for enforcing payment that shows the family has requested enforcement and is cooperating with all enforcement efforts

If the family has made independent efforts at collection, a written statement from the attorney or other collection entity that has assisted the family in these efforts

**Note:** Families are not required to undertake independent enforcement action.

### **7-III.E. ASSETS AND INCOME FROM ASSETS**

#### **Assets Disposed of for Less than Fair Market Value**

The family must certify whether any assets have been disposed of for less than fair market value in the preceding two years. The PHA needs to verify only those certifications that warrant documentation [HCV GB, p. 5-28].

##### PHA Policy

The PHA will verify the value of assets disposed of only if:

The PHA does not already have a reasonable estimation of its value from previously collected information, or

The amount reported by the family in the certification appears obviously in error.

Example 1: An elderly resident reported a \$10,000 certificate of deposit at the last annual reexamination and the PHA verified this amount. Now the person reports that she has given this \$10,000 to her son. The PHA has a reasonable estimate of the value of the asset; therefore, reverification of the value of the asset is not necessary.

Example 2: A family member has disposed of its 1/4 share of real property located in a desirable area and has valued her share at approximately 5,000. Based upon market conditions, this declaration does not seem realistic. Therefore, the PHA will verify the value of this asset.

### **7-III.F. NET INCOME FROM RENTAL PROPERTY**

##### PHA Policy

The family must provide:

A current executed lease for the property that shows the rental amount or certification from the current tenant

A self-certification from the family members engaged in the rental of property providing an estimate of expenses for the coming year and the most recent IRS Form 1040 with Schedule E (Rental Income). If schedule E was not prepared, the PHA will require the family members involved in the rental of property to provide a self-certification of income and expenses for the previous year and may request documentation to support the statement including: tax statements, insurance invoices, bills for reasonable maintenance and utilities, and bank statements or amortization schedules showing monthly interest expense.



## **7-III.G. RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS**

### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will accept written third-party documents supplied by the family as evidence of the status of retirement accounts.

The type of original document that will be accepted depends upon the family member's retirement status.

*Before* retirement, the PHA will accept an original document from the entity holding the account with a date that shows it is the most recently scheduled statement for the account but in no case earlier than 120 days from the effective date of the examination.

*Upon* retirement, the PHA will accept an original document from the entity holding the account that reflects any distributions of the account balance, any lump sums taken and any regular payments.

*After* retirement, the PHA will accept an original document from the entity holding the account dated no earlier than 120 days before that reflects any distributions of the account balance, any lump sums taken and any regular payments.

### **7-III.H. INCOME FROM EXCLUDED SOURCES**

A detailed discussion of excluded income is provided in Chapter 6, Part I.

HUD guidance on verification of excluded income draws a distinction between income which is fully excluded and income which is only partially excluded.

For fully excluded income, the PHA is **not** required to follow the verification hierarchy, document why third-party verification is not available, or report the income on the 50058. Fully excluded income is defined as income that is entirely excluded from the annual income determination (for example, food stamps, earned income of a minor, or foster care funds) [Notice PIH 2013-04].

PHAs may accept a family's signed application or reexamination form as self-certification of fully excluded income. They do not have to require additional documentation. However, if there is any doubt that a source of income qualifies for full exclusion, PHAs have the option of requiring additional verification.

For partially excluded income, the PHA **is** required to follow the verification hierarchy and all applicable regulations, and to report the income on the 50058. Partially excluded income is defined as income where only a certain portion of what is reported by the family qualifies to be excluded and the remainder is included in annual income (for example, the income of an adult full-time student, or income excluded under the earned income disallowance).

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will accept the family's self-certification as verification of fully excluded income. The PHA may request additional documentation if necessary to document the income source.

The PHA will verify the source and amount of partially excluded income as described in Part 1 of this chapter.

### **7-III.I. ZERO ANNUAL INCOME STATUS**

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will check UIV sources and/or request information from third-party sources to verify that certain forms of income such as unemployment benefits, TANF, SS, SSI, earned income, etc. are not being received by families claiming to have zero annual income. The PHA will review the family's income status every 90 days for those families claiming zero income.

## **PART IV: VERIFYING MANDATORY DEDUCTIONS**

### **7-IV.A. DEPENDENT AND ELDERLY/DISABLED HOUSEHOLD DEDUCTIONS**

The dependent and elderly/disabled family deductions require only that the PHA verify that the family members identified as dependents or elderly/disabled persons meet the statutory definitions. No further verifications are required.

#### **Dependent Deduction**

See Chapter 6 (6-II.B.) for a full discussion of this deduction. The PHA will verify that:

- Any person under the age of 18 for whom the dependent deduction is claimed is not the head, spouse or cohead of the family and is not a foster child
- Any person age 18 or older for whom the dependent deduction is claimed is not a foster adult or live-in aide, and is a person with a disability or a full time student

#### **Elderly/Disabled Family Deduction**

See the Eligibility chapter for a definition of elderly and disabled families and Chapter 6 (6-II.C.) for a discussion of the deduction. The PHA will verify that the head, spouse, or cohead is 62 years of age or older or a person with disabilities.

## **7-IV.B. MEDICAL EXPENSE DEDUCTION**

Policies related to medical expenses are found in 6-II.D. The amount of the deduction will be verified following the standard verification procedures described in Part I.

### **Amount of Expense**

#### PHA Policy

Medical expenses will be verified through:

Written third-party documents provided by the family, such as pharmacy printouts or receipts.

The PHA will make a best effort to determine what expenses from the past are likely to continue to occur in the future. The PHA will also accept evidence of monthly payments or total payments that will be due for medical expenses during the upcoming 12 months.

Written third-party verification forms, if the family is unable to provide acceptable documentation.

If third-party or document review is not possible, written family certification as to costs anticipated to be incurred during the upcoming 12 months.

In addition, the PHA must verify that:

- The household is eligible for the deduction.
- The costs to be deducted are qualified medical expenses.
- The expenses are not paid for or reimbursed by any other source.
- Costs incurred in past years are counted only once.

**Eligible Household**

The medical expense deduction is permitted only for households in which the head, spouse, or cohead is at least 62 or a person with disabilities. The PHA will verify that the family meets the definition of an elderly or disabled family provided in the Eligibility chapter, and as described in Chapter 7 (7-IV.A) of this plan.

**Qualified Expenses**

To be eligible for the medical expenses deduction, the costs must qualify as medical expenses. See Chapter 6 (6-II.D.) for the PHA's policy on what counts as a medical expense.

**Unreimbursed Expenses**

To be eligible for the medical expenses deduction, the costs must not be reimbursed by another source.

PHA Policy

The family will be required to certify that the medical expenses are not paid or reimbursed to the family from any source. If expenses are verified through a third party, the third party must certify that the expenses are not paid or reimbursed from any other source.

**Expenses Incurred in Past Years**PHA Policy

When anticipated costs are related to on-going payment of medical bills incurred in past years, the PHA will verify:

- The anticipated repayment schedule

- The amounts paid in the past, and

- Whether the amounts to be repaid have been deducted from the family's annual income in past years

Medical mileage will be used as a deduction. Staff will google the distance from the tenant's unit to the medical facility and will use the mileage allowance permitted in IRS Publication 502 times the mileage round trip. The tenant must provide proof of medical appointments.

## **7-IV.C. DISABILITY ASSISTANCE EXPENSES**

Policies related to disability assistance expenses are found in 6-II.E. The amount of the deduction will be verified following the standard verification procedures described in Part I.

### **Amount of Expense**

#### ***Attendant Care***

##### PHA Policy

The PHA will accept written third-party documents provided by the family.

If family-provided documents are not available, the PHA will provide a third-party verification form directly to the care provider requesting the needed information.

Expenses for attendant care will be verified through:

Written third-party documents provided by the family, such as receipts or cancelled checks.

Third-party verification form signed by the provider, if family-provided documents are not available.

If third-party verification is not possible, written family certification as to costs anticipated to be incurred for the upcoming 12 months.

#### ***Auxiliary Apparatus***

##### PHA Policy

Expenses for auxiliary apparatus will be verified through:

Written third-party documents provided by the family, such as billing statements for purchase of auxiliary apparatus, or other evidence of monthly payments or total payments that will be due for the apparatus during the upcoming 12 months.

Third-party verification form signed by the provider, if family-provided documents are not available.

If third-party or document review is not possible, written family certification of estimated apparatus costs for the upcoming 12 months.

In addition, the PHA must verify that:

- The family member for whom the expense is incurred is a person with disabilities (as described in 7-II.F above).
- The expense permits a family member, or members, to work (as described in 6-II.E.).
- The expense is not reimbursed from another source (as described in 6-II.E.).

### **Family Member is a Person with Disabilities**

To be eligible for the disability assistance expense deduction, the costs must be incurred for attendant care or auxiliary apparatus expense associated with a person with disabilities. The PHA will verify that the expense is incurred for a person with disabilities (See 7-II.F.).

### **Family Member(s) Permitted to Work**

The PHA must verify that the expenses claimed actually enable a family member, or members, (including the person with disabilities) to work.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will request third-party verification from a rehabilitation agency or knowledgeable medical professional indicating that the person with disabilities requires attendant care or an auxiliary apparatus to be employed, or that the attendant care or auxiliary apparatus enables another family member, or members, to work (See 6-II.E.). This documentation may be provided by the family.

If third-party verification has been attempted and is either unavailable or proves unsuccessful, the family must certify that the disability assistance expense frees a family member, or members (possibly including the family member receiving the assistance), to work.

### **Unreimbursed Expenses**

To be eligible for the disability expenses deduction, the costs must not be reimbursed by another source.

#### PHA Policy

The family will be required to certify that attendant care or auxiliary apparatus expenses are not paid by or reimbursed to the family from any source.

#### **7-IV.D. CHILD CARE EXPENSES**

Policies related to child care expenses are found in Chapter 6 (6-II.F). The amount of the deduction will be verified following the standard verification procedures described in Part I. In addition, the PHA must verify that:

- The child is eligible for care (12 or younger).
- The costs claimed are not reimbursed.
- The costs enable a family member to work, actively seek work, or further their education.
- The costs are for an allowable type of child care.
- The costs are reasonable.

##### **Eligible Child**

To be eligible for the child care deduction, the costs must be incurred for the care of a child under the age of 13. The PHA will verify that the child being cared for (including foster children) is under the age of 13 (See 7-II.C.).

##### **Unreimbursed Expense**

To be eligible for the child care deduction, the costs must not be reimbursed by another source.

##### PHA Policy

The family and the care provider will be required to certify that the child care expenses are not paid by or reimbursed to the family from any source.



## **Pursuing an Eligible Activity**

The PHA must verify that the family member(s) that the family has identified as being enabled to seek work, pursue education, or be gainfully employed, are actually pursuing those activities.

### PHA Policy

#### *Information to be Gathered*

The PHA will verify information about how the schedule for the claimed activity relates to the hours of care provided, the time required for transportation, the time required for study (for students), the relationship of the family member(s) to the child, and any special needs of the child that might help determine which family member is enabled to pursue an eligible activity.

#### *Seeking Work*

Whenever possible the PHA will use documentation from a state or local agency that monitors work-related requirements (e.g., welfare or unemployment). In such cases the PHA will request family-provided verification from the agency of the member's job seeking efforts to date and require the family to submit to the PHA any reports provided to the other agency.

In the event third-party verification is not available, the PHA will provide the family with a form on which the family member must record job search efforts. The PHA will review this information at each subsequent reexamination for which this deduction is claimed.

#### *Furthering Education*

The PHA will request third-party documentation to verify that the person permitted to further his or her education by the child care is enrolled and provide information about the timing of classes for which the person is registered. The documentation may be provided by the family.

#### *Gainful Employment*

The PHA will seek third-party verification of the work schedule of the person who is permitted to work by the child care. In cases in which two or more family members could be permitted to work, the work schedules for all relevant family members may be verified. The documentation may be provided by the family.

## **Allowable Type of Child Care**

The type of care to be provided is determined by the family, but must fall within certain guidelines, as discussed in Chapter 6.

### PHA Policy

The PHA will verify that the type of child care selected by the family is allowable, as described in Chapter 6 (6-II.F).

The PHA will verify that the fees paid to the child care provider cover only child care costs (e.g., no housekeeping services or personal services) and are paid only for the care of an eligible child (e.g., prorate costs if some of the care is provided for ineligible family members).

The PHA will verify that the child care provider is not an assisted family member. Verification will be made through the head of household's declaration of family members who are expected to reside in the unit.

## **Reasonableness of Expenses**

Only reasonable child care costs can be deducted.

### PHA Policy

The actual costs the family incurs will be compared with local child care providers to ensure that the costs are reasonable.

If the family presents a justification for costs that exceed typical costs in the area, the PHA will request additional documentation, as required, to support a determination that the higher cost is appropriate.

**Exhibit 7-1: Summary of Documentation Requirements for Noncitizens**  
**[HCV GB, pp. 5-9 and 5-10]**

- **All** noncitizens claiming eligible status must sign a declaration of eligible immigrant status on a form acceptable to the PHA.
- Except for persons 62 or older, all noncitizens must sign a verification consent form
- Additional documents are required based upon the person's status.

**Elderly Noncitizens**

- A person 62 years of age or older who claims eligible immigration status also must provide proof of age such as birth certificate, passport, or documents showing receipt of SS old-age benefits.

**All other Noncitizens**

- Noncitizens that claim eligible immigration status also must present the applicable USCIS document. Acceptable USCIS documents are listed below.

- Form I-551 Alien Registration Receipt Card (for permanent resident aliens)
- Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record annotated with one of the following:
  - “Admitted as a Refugee Pursuant to Section 207”
  - “Section 208” or “Asylum”
  - “Section 243(h)” or “Deportation stayed by Attorney General”
  - “Paroled Pursuant to Section 221 (d)(5) of the USCIS”

- Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record with no annotation accompanied by:
  - A final court decision granting asylum (but only if no appeal is taken);
  - A letter from a USCIS asylum officer granting asylum (if application is filed on or after 10/1/90) or from a USCIS district director granting asylum (application filed before 10/1/90);
  - A court decision granting withholding of deportation; or
  - A letter from an asylum officer granting withholding or deportation (if application filed on or after 10/1/90).

- Form I-688 Temporary Resident Card annotated “Section 245A” or Section 210”.

Form I-688B Employment Authorization Card annotated “Provision of Law 274a. 12(11)” or “Provision of Law 274a.12”.

- A receipt issued by the USCIS indicating that an application for issuance of a replacement document in one of the above listed categories has been made and the applicant’s entitlement to the document has been verified; or
- Other acceptable evidence. If other documents are determined by the USCIS to constitute acceptable evidence of eligible immigration status, they will be announced by notice published in the *Federal Register*



## Chapter 8

### LEASING AND INSPECTIONS

[24 CFR 5, Subpart G; 24 CFR 966, Subpart A]

#### INTRODUCTION

Public housing leases are the contractual basis of the legal relationship between the PHA and the tenant. All units must be occupied pursuant to a dwelling lease agreement that complies with HUD regulations.

HUD regulations require the PHA to inspect each dwelling unit prior to move-in, at move-out, and annually during the period of occupancy. In addition, the PHA may conduct additional inspections in accordance with PHA policy.

This chapter is divided into two parts as follows:

Part I: Leasing. This part describes pre-leasing activities and the PHA's policies pertaining to lease execution, lease modification, and payments under the lease.

Part II: Inspections. This part describes the PHA's policies for inspecting dwelling units.

#### PART I: LEASING

##### 8-I.A. OVERVIEW

An eligible family may occupy a public housing dwelling unit under the terms of a lease. The lease must meet all regulatory requirements, and must also comply with applicable state and local laws and codes.

The term of the lease must be for a period of 12 months. The lease must be renewed automatically for another 12-month term, except that the PHA may not renew the lease if the family has violated the community service requirement [24 CFR 966.4(a)(2)].

PHAs must adopt smoke-free policies which must be implemented no later than July 30, 2018. The policy is attached as Exhibit 8-1

Part I of this chapter contains regulatory information on leasing, where applicable, as well as the PHA's leasing policies.

## **8-I.B. LEASE ORIENTATION**

### PHA Policy

After unit acceptance but prior to occupancy, a PHA representative will conduct a lease orientation with the family. All adults in the family are required to attend.

### **Orientation Agenda**

#### PHA Policy

When families attend the lease orientation, they will be provided with:

- A copy of the lease
- A copy of the PHA's grievance procedure
- A copy of the house rules
- A copy of the PHA's schedule of maintenance charges
- A copy of the pamphlet *Protect Your Family From Lead in Your Home*
- A copy of "Is Fraud Worth It?" (form HUD-1141-OIG), which explains the types of actions a family must avoid and the penalties for program abuse
- A copy of "What You Should Know about EIV," a guide to the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system published by HUD as an attachment to Notice PIH 2017-12
- A copy of HUD-5380, VAWA Notice of Occupancy Rights
- A copy of the Smoke Free Addendum
- A notice that includes the procedures for requesting relief and the PHA's criteria for granting requests for relief for excess utility surcharges

Topics to be discussed and explained to all families include:

- Applicable deposits and all other charges
- Review and explanation of lease provisions
- Unit maintenance requests and work orders
- The PHA's interim reporting requirements
- Review and explanation of occupancy forms
- Community service requirements
- Family choice of rent
- VAWA protections
- Smoke Free policies

## **8-I.C. EXECUTION OF LEASE**

The lease must be executed by the tenant and the PHA, except for automatic renewals of a lease [24 CFR 966.4(a)(3)].

A lease is executed at the time of admission for all new residents. A new lease is also executed at the time of transfer from one PHA unit to another.

The lease must state the composition of the household as approved by the PHA (family members and any PHA-approved live-in aide) [24 CFR 966.4(a)(1)(v)]. See Section 8-I.D. for policies regarding changes in family composition during the lease term.

### **PHA Policy**

The head of household, spouse or cohead, and all other adult members of the household will be required to sign the public housing lease prior to admission. An appointment will be scheduled for the parties to execute the lease. The head of household will be provided a copy of the executed lease and the PHA will retain a copy in the resident's file.

Files for households that include a live-in aide will contain file documentation signed by the live-in aide, that the live-in aide is not a party to the lease and is not entitled to PHA assistance. The live-in aide is only approved to live in the unit while serving as the care attendant for the family member who requires the care.

## **8-I.D. MODIFICATIONS TO THE LEASE**

The lease may be modified at any time by written agreement of the tenant and the PHA [24 CFR 966.4(a)(3)].

### **Modifications to the Lease Form**

The PHA may modify its uniform lease document from time to time. However, the PHA must give residents at least thirty (30) days advance notice of the proposed changes and an opportunity to comment on the changes. The PHA must also consider any comments before formally adopting a new lease [24 CFR 966.3].

After proposed changes have been incorporated into the lease and approved by the Board, each family must be notified at least 60 days in advance of the effective date of the new lease or lease revision. A resident's refusal to accept permissible and reasonable lease modifications that are made in accordance with HUD requirements, or are required by HUD, is grounds for termination of tenancy [24 CFR 966.4(l)(2)(iii)(E)].

#### PHA Policy

The family will have 60 days to accept the revised lease. If the family does not accept the offer of the revised lease within that 60 day time frame, the family's tenancy will be terminated for other good cause in accordance with the policies in Chapter 13.

Schedules of special charges and rules and regulations are subject to modification or revision. Because these schedules are incorporated into the lease by reference, residents and resident organizations must be provided at least thirty days written notice of the reason(s) for any proposed modifications or revisions, and must be given an opportunity to present written comments. The notice must be delivered directly or mailed to each tenant; or posted in at least three conspicuous places within each structure or building in which the affected dwelling units are located, as well as in a conspicuous place at the project office, if any, or if none, a similar central business location within the project. Comments must be taken into consideration before any proposed modifications or revisions become effective [24 CFR 966.5].

After the proposed revisions become effective they must be publicly posted in a conspicuous manner in the project office and must be furnished to applicants and tenants on request [24 CFR 966.5].

#### PHA Policy

When the PHA proposes to modify or revise schedules of special charges or rules and regulations, the PHA will post a copy of the notice in the central office, and will mail a copy of the notice to each resident family. Documentation of proper notice will be included in each resident file.



## **Other Modifications**

### PHA Policy

The lease will be amended to reflect all changes in family composition.

If, for any reason, any member of the household ceases to reside in the unit, the lease will be amended by drawing a line through the person's name. The head of household and PHA will be required to initial and date the change.

If a new household member is approved by the PHA to reside in the unit, the person's name and birth date will be added to the lease promptly. The head of household and PHA will be required to initial and date the change. If the new member of the household is an adult, s/he will also be required to sign and date the lease.

Policies governing when and how changes in family composition must be reported are contained in Chapter 9, Reexaminations.

## **8-I.E. SECURITY DEPOSITS [24 CFR 966.4(b)(5)]**

At the option of the PHA, the lease may require security deposits. The amount of the security deposit cannot exceed one month's rent or a reasonable fixed amount as determined by the PHA. The PHA may allow for gradual accumulation of the security deposit by the family, or the family may be required to pay the security deposit in full prior to occupancy. Subject to applicable laws, interest earned on security deposits may be refunded to the tenant after vacating the unit, or used for tenant services or activities.

### PHA Policy

Residents must pay a security deposit to the PHA at the time of admission. The amount of the security deposit is \$400 at the Scattered Site units and \$250 at the Whispering Pines units. The deposit must be paid in full prior to occupancy unless other arrangements have been made. A payment plan of 3 equal payments over three months may be offered. Failure to remain current on the payment plan will result in termination of the lease.

The PHA will hold the security deposit for the period the family occupies the unit. The PHA will not use the security deposit for rent or other charges while the resident is living in the unit.

Within 21 days of move-out, the PHA will refund to the resident the amount of the security deposit (including interest earned on the security deposit), less any amount needed to pay the cost of unpaid rent, damages listed on the move-out inspection report that exceed normal wear and tear, and other charges due under the lease.

The PHA will provide the resident with a written list of any charges against the security deposit within 21 days of the move-out inspection. If the resident disagrees with the amount charged, the PHA will provide a meeting to discuss the charges. If the resident refuses to pay the amount owed the PHA will list the amount owed on HUD's EIV website. The resident will not be able to secure any type of assisted housing until all amounts are paid in full.

If the resident transfers to another unit, the PHA will collect a new security deposit for the new unit. The tenant will receive within 21 days of move-out from the former unit a disposition of the former unit's security deposit. The tenant will be billed for any maintenance or other charges due for the former unit. If damages surpass the security deposit for the former unit, the PHA shall require payment for the damages within 30 days of notification. Failure to make payment will result in termination of the lease for the new unit. The PHA reserves the right to transfer the security deposit to the new unit in the event of an emergency or circumstances not caused by the tenant.

## **8-I.F. PAYMENTS UNDER THE LEASE**

### **Rent Payments [24 CFR 966.4(b)(1)]**

Families must pay the amount of the monthly tenant rent determined by the PHA in accordance with HUD regulations and other requirements. The amount of the tenant rent is subject to change in accordance with HUD requirements.

The lease must specify the initial amount of the tenant rent at the beginning of the initial lease term, and the PHA must give written notice stating any change in the amount of tenant rent and when the change is effective.

#### PHA Policy

The tenant rent is due and payable at the PHA-designated location on the first of every month. If the first falls on a weekend or holiday, the rent is due and payable on the first business day thereafter.

If a family's tenant rent changes, the PHA will notify the family of the new amount and the effective date by sending a "Notice of Rent Adjustment" which will become an attachment to the lease.

## **Late Fees and Nonpayment**

At the option of the PHA, the lease may provide for payment of penalties when the family is late in paying tenant rent [24 CFR 966.4(b)(3)].

The lease must provide that late payment fees are not due and collectible until two weeks after the PHA gives written notice of the charges. The written notice is considered an adverse action, and must meet the requirements governing a notice of adverse action [24 CFR 966.4(b)(4)].

The notice of proposed adverse action must identify the specific grounds for the action and inform the family of their right for a hearing under the PHA grievance procedures. The PHA must not take the proposed action until the time for the tenant to request a grievance hearing has expired, or (if a hearing was requested within the required timeframe,) the grievance process has been completed [24 CFR 966.4(e)(8)].

### **PHA Policy**

If the family fails to pay their rent by end of business on the fifth day of the month, and the PHA has not agreed to accept payment at a later date, a 14 day Notice to Vacate will be issued to the resident for failure to pay rent, demanding payment in full or the surrender of the premises.

In addition, if the resident fails to make payment by the end of office hours on the fifth day of the month, a late fee of \$25.00 or not to exceed 8% of the tenant rent owed will be charged. Notices of late fees will be in accordance with requirements regarding notices of adverse action. Charges are due and payable 14 calendar days after billing. If the family requests a grievance hearing within the required timeframe, the PHA may not take action for nonpayment of the fee until the conclusion of the grievance process. If the resident can document financial hardship, the late fee may be waived on a case-by-case basis.

When a check is returned for insufficient funds or is written on a closed account, the rent will be considered unpaid and a returned check fee of \$25.00 will be charged to the family. The fee will be due and payable 14 days after billing.

## **Excess Utility Charges**

If the PHA charges the tenant for consumption of excess utilities, the lease must state the basis for the determination of such charges. The imposition of charges for consumption of excess utilities is permissible only if the charges are determined by an individual check meter servicing the leased unit or result from the use of major tenant-supplied appliances [24 CFR 966.4(b)(2)].

Schedules of special charges for utilities that are required to be incorporated in the lease by reference must be publicly posted in a conspicuous manner in the development office and must be furnished to applicants and tenants on request [24 CFR 966.5].

The lease must provide that charges for excess utility consumption are not due and collectible until two weeks after the PHA gives written notice of the charges. The written notice is considered an adverse action, and must meet the requirements governing a notice of adverse action [24 CFR 966.4(b)(4)].

The notice of proposed adverse action must identify the specific grounds for the action and inform the family of their right to a hearing under the PHA grievance procedures. The PHA must not take the proposed action until the time for the tenant to request a grievance hearing has expired, or (if a hearing was requested within the required timeframe,) the grievance process has been completed [24 CFR 966.4(e)(8)].

### **PHA Policy**

When applicable, families will be charged for excess utility usage according to the PHA's current posted schedule. Notices of excess utility charges will be mailed monthly and will be in accordance with requirements regarding notices of adverse actions. Charges are due and payable 30 calendar days after billing. If the family requests a grievance hearing within the required timeframe, the PHA may not take action for nonpayment of the charges until the conclusion of the grievance process.

Nonpayment of excess utility charges is a violation of the lease and is grounds for eviction.

The PHA may grant requests for relief from surcharges from excess utility consumption of PHA-furnished utilities as a reasonable accommodation where the PHA deems an exception is appropriate to meet the needs of elderly, ill or disabled residents. In determining whether to grant this request, the PHA will consider special factors affecting utility usage that are not within the control of the resident, such as the need for medical equipment. Residents may request in accordance with Section 2-II.C of this ACOP. The PHA will process such requests in accordance with Section 2-II.E of this ACOP.

Notice of the availability of procedures for requesting relief (including the PHA representative with whom initial contact may be made by the resident) and the PHA's criteria for granting requests, will be included in each notice to residents of changes in utility allowances or surcharges as well as to new residents as part of the lease orientation.

## **Maintenance and Damage Charges**

If the PHA charges the tenant for maintenance and repair beyond normal wear and tear, the lease must state the basis for the determination of such charges [24 CFR 966.4(b)(2)].

Schedules of special charges for services and repairs which are required to be incorporated in the lease by reference must be publicly posted in a conspicuous manner in the development office and must be furnished to applicants and tenants on request [24 CFR 966.5].

The lease must provide that charges for maintenance and repair beyond normal wear and tear are not due and collectible until two weeks after the PHA gives written notice of the charges. The written notice is considered an adverse action, and must meet the requirements governing a notice of adverse action [24 CFR 966.4(b)(4)].

The notice of proposed adverse action must identify the specific grounds for the action and inform the family of their right for a hearing under the PHA grievance procedures. The PHA must not take the proposed action until the time for the tenant to request a grievance hearing has expired, or (if a hearing was requested within the required timeframe,) the grievance process has been completed [24 CFR 966.4(e)(8)].

### PHA Policy

When applicable, families will be charged for maintenance and/or damages according to the PHA's current schedule. Work that is not covered in the schedule will be charged based on the actual cost of labor and materials to make needed repairs (including overtime, if applicable).

Notices of maintenance and damage charges will be mailed monthly and will be in accordance with requirements regarding notices of adverse actions. Charges are due and payable 30 calendar days after billing. If the family requests a grievance hearing within the required timeframe, the PHA may not take action for nonpayment of the charges until the conclusion of the grievance process.

Nonpayment of maintenance and damage charges is a violation of the lease and is grounds for eviction.

## **PART II: INSPECTIONS**

### **8-II.A. OVERVIEW**

HUD regulations require the PHA to inspect each dwelling unit prior to move-in, at move-out, and annually during occupancy. In addition, the PHA may require additional inspections, in accordance with PHA Policy. This part contains the PHA's policies governing inspections, notification of unit entry, and inspection results.

### **8-II.B. TYPES OF INSPECTIONS**

#### **Move-In Inspections [24 CFR 966.4(i)]**

The lease must require the PHA and the family to inspect the dwelling unit prior to occupancy in order to determine the condition of the unit and equipment in the unit. A copy of the initial inspection, signed by the PHA and the tenant, must be provided to the tenant and retained in the resident file.

##### PHA Policy

All adult family members must attend the initial inspection and the Head of Household must sign the inspection form.

#### **Move-Out Inspections [24 CFR 966.4(i)]**

The PHA must inspect the unit at the time the resident vacates the unit and must allow the resident to participate in the inspection if he or she wishes, unless the tenant vacates without notice to the PHA. The PHA must provide to the tenant a statement of any charges to be made for maintenance and damage beyond normal wear and tear.

The difference between the condition of the unit at move-in and move-out establishes the basis for any charges against the security deposit so long as the work needed exceeds that for normal wear and tear.

##### PHA Policy

When applicable, the PHA will provide the tenant with a statement of charges to be made for maintenance and damage beyond normal wear and tear, within 21 business days of the move-out date.

#### **Annual Inspections [24 CFR 5.705]**

Section 6(f)(3) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 requires that PHAs inspect each public housing project annually to ensure that the project's units are maintained in decent, safe and sanitary condition. The PHA shall continue using the Uniform Physical Condition Standards (UPCS) in 24 CFR 5, Subpart G, Physical Condition Standards and Inspection Requirements, to conduct annual project inspections. These standards address the inspection of the site area, building systems and components, and dwelling units.

##### PHA Policy

The PHA will inspect all occupied units annually using HUD's Uniform Physical Condition Standards (UPCS).

## **Quality Control Inspections**

The purpose of quality control inspections is to assure that all defects were identified in the original inspection, and that repairs were completed at an acceptable level of craftsmanship and within an acceptable time frame

### PHA Policy

Supervisory quality control inspections may be conducted.

## **Special Inspections**

### PHA Policy

PHA staff may conduct a special inspection for any of the following reasons:

Housekeeping

Unit condition

Suspected lease violation

Preventive maintenance

Routine maintenance

There is reasonable cause to believe an emergency exists

## **Other Inspections**

### PHA Policy

Building exteriors, grounds, common areas and systems will be inspected according to the PHA's maintenance plan.



## **8-II.C. NOTICE AND SCHEDULING OF INSPECTIONS**

### **Notice of Entry**

#### ***Non-emergency Entries [24 CFR 966.4(j)(1)]***

The PHA may enter the unit, with reasonable advance notification to perform routine inspections and maintenance, make improvements and repairs, or to show the unit for re-leasing. A written statement specifying the purpose of the PHA entry delivered to the dwelling unit at least two days before such entry is considered reasonable advance notification.

##### PHA Policy

The PHA will notify the resident in writing at least 48 hours prior to any non-emergency inspection.

For regular annual inspections, the family will receive at least 2 weeks written notice of the inspection to allow the family to prepare the unit for the inspection.

Entry for repairs requested by the family will not require prior notice. Resident-requested repairs presume permission for the PHA to enter the unit.

#### ***Emergency Entries [24 CFR 966.4(j)(2)]***

The PHA may enter the dwelling unit at any time without advance notice when there is reasonable cause to believe that an emergency exists. If no adult household member is present at the time of an emergency entry, the PHA must leave a written statement showing the date, time and purpose of the entry prior to leaving the dwelling unit.

### **Scheduling of Inspections**

##### PHA Policy

Inspections will be conducted during business hours. If a family needs to reschedule an inspection, they must notify the PHA at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled inspection. The PHA will reschedule the inspection no more than once unless the resident has a verifiable good cause to delay the inspection. The PHA may request verification of such cause.

### **Attendance at Inspections**

Residents are required to be present for move-in inspections [24 CFR 966.4(i)]. There is no such requirement for other types of inspections.

##### PHA Policy

Except at move-in inspections, the resident is not required to be present for the inspection. The resident may attend the inspection if he or she wishes.

If no one is at home, the inspector will enter the unit, conduct the inspection and leave a copy of the inspection report in the unit.

## **8-II.D. INSPECTION RESULTS**

The PHA is obligated to maintain dwelling units and the project in decent, safe and sanitary condition and to make necessary repairs to dwelling units [24 CFR 966.4(e)].

### **Emergency Repairs [24 CFR 966.4(h)]**

If the unit is damaged to the extent that conditions are created which are hazardous to the life, health, or safety of the occupants, the tenant must immediately notify the PHA of the damage, and the PHA must make repairs within a reasonable time frame.

If the damage was caused by a household member or guest, the PHA must charge the family for the reasonable cost of repairs. The PHA may also take lease enforcement action against the family.

If the PHA cannot make repairs quickly, the PHA must offer the family standard alternative accommodations. If the PHA can neither repair the defect within a reasonable time frame nor offer alternative housing, rent shall be abated in proportion to the seriousness of the damage and loss in value as a dwelling. Rent shall not be abated if the damage was caused by a household member or guest, or if the resident rejects the alternative accommodations.

#### PHA Policy

When conditions in the unit are hazardous to life, health, or safety and have been reported to management, the PHA will make repairs or otherwise abate the situation within 24 hours.

Defects hazardous to life, health or safety include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Any condition that jeopardizes the security of the unit
- Major plumbing leaks or flooding, waterlogged ceiling or floor in imminent danger of falling
- Natural or LP gas or fuel oil leaks
- Any electrical problem or condition that could result in shock or fire
- Absence of a working heating system when outside temperature is below 55 degrees Fahrenheit
- Utilities not in service, including no running hot water
- Conditions that present the imminent possibility of injury
- Obstacles that prevent safe entrance or exit from the unit
- Absence of a functioning toilet in the unit
- Inoperable smoke detectors

## **Non-emergency Repairs**

### PHA Policy

The PHA will correct non-life threatening health and safety defects within 15 business days of the inspection date. If the PHA is unable to make repairs within that period due to circumstances beyond the PHA's control (e.g. required parts or services are not available, weather conditions, etc.) the PHA will notify the family of an estimated date of completion.

The family must allow the PHA access to the unit to make repairs.

## **Resident-Caused Damages**

### PHA Policy

Damages to the unit beyond wear and tear will be billed to the tenant in accordance with the policies in 8-I.G., Maintenance and Damage Charges.

Repeated or excessive damages to the unit beyond normal wear and tear will be considered a serious or repeated violation of the lease. Ordinary wear and tear means deterioration that occurs without negligence, carelessness or abuse of premises, equipment, furnishings or appliances by the tenant, a member of household or other persons on the premises with tenant's consent.

## ***Housekeeping***

### PHA Policy

Residents whose housekeeping habits pose a non-emergency health or safety risk, encourage insect or rodent infestation, or cause damage to the unit are in violation of the lease. In these instances, the PHA will provide proper notice of a lease violation.

A reinspection will be conducted within 14 days to confirm that the resident has complied with the requirement to abate the problem. Failure to abate the problem or allow for a reinspection is considered a violation of the lease and may result in termination of tenancy in accordance with Chapter 13.

Notices of lease violation will also be issued to residents who purposely disengage the unit's smoke detector. Only one warning will be given. A second incidence will result in lease termination.

Inspections for housekeeping items to insure that the unit continues to be in good condition will be weekly for one month, then monthly for three months and then semi-annually thereafter.

### PART III LEASE AND SMOKE FREE LEASE ADDENDUMS

The Washington County CDA lease and Smoke Free Lease Addendums

## PUBLIC HOUSING LEASE

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1. **PARTIES AND DWELLING UNIT:**

The parties to this Lease are The Washington County Community Development Agency, referred to as Owner, Shelter Corporation as Agent for the Owner referred to as Shelter Corporation, and the occupying family,

\_\_\_\_\_,  
referred to as the Resident.

**IMPORTANT! READ THIS SECTION CAREFULLY:**

**SHELTER CORPORATION STATUS:**

It is understood that Shelter Corporation acts as Agent for the Owner. Resident(s) agree that Shelter Corporation as Agent for the Owner may exercise any of the rights, powers and benefits that the Owner may have.

The Owner leases to the Resident the premises located at:

\_\_\_\_\_.

The premises leased are for the exclusive use and occupancy of the Resident and the Resident's household consisting of the following named persons who will live in the dwelling unit:

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Date of Birth</u></b>	<b><u>Social Security Number</u></b>
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Any additions to the household members listed above require the advance written approval of the Owner. This approval includes Live-in Aides and foster children or adults, but excludes natural births. The Owner shall approve the additions if they pass the screening and an appropriate size unit is available. Deletions from the household shall be reported to the Owner in writing within five (5) days.

If the Resident is incapable of complying with this Lease, the Owner should contact the following person:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone  
number: \_\_\_\_\_.

**2. LEASE TERM:**

This Lease shall begin on \_\_\_\_\_. The term shall be one year and shall renew automatically for another year, unless terminated as provided by this Lease.

**3. RENTAL PAYMENT:**

Resident shall pay monthly rent of \$\_\_\_\_\_. If this Lease begins on a day other than the first day of the month, the first month's rent shall be \_\_\_\_\_.

(Check one)

\_\_\_\_\_ The rent is based on the Owner determined flat rent for this unit.

\_\_\_\_\_ The rent is based on 30% of the Resident's household monthly adjusted income (formula based).

Resident may change rent calculation methods at any re-certification. Resident who has chosen the flat rent option may request a reexamination and change to the formula-based option at any time if the family's income has decreased, their on-going expenses for such purposes as child care and medical care have changed, or any other circumstances that create a hardship for the family that would be alleviated by a change.

This amount is due on the first day of each month by close of business at the office of:

\_\_\_\_\_ Raymie Johnson Estates, located at 14830 58<sup>th</sup> St. N., Stillwater, Minnesota, 55082, or

\_\_\_\_\_ Whispering Pines, located at 7 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.E, Forest Lake MN 55025.

The amount of rent shall remain in effect until adjusted in accordance with the provisions of this lease. If a reasonable accommodation on where to pay rent is needed, other arrangements can be made. Cash payments are not acceptable.

If Resident fails to make the rent payment by the fifth day of the month, a notice to vacate will be issued to the Resident. A \$25 late charge will be assessed to cover the added administrative costs of a rent payment received after the fifth day of the month. A check returned for non-sufficient funds shall be considered non-payment of rent and in addition to the late charge a \$25 returned check fee will be charged.

Repeated late payments of rent may be grounds for lease termination. Repeated late payments means late 4 times in any 12 month period.

If the Resident is paying the minimum rent and circumstances have changed creating an inability to pay the rent, the Resident may request suspension of the minimum rent because of a recognized hardship.

In the event legal proceedings are required to recover possession of the premises, the Resident will be charged with the actual cost of such proceedings.

4. **SECURITY DEPOSIT:**

The Resident has paid the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the Owner as a Security Deposit.

With the approval of the Owner, the Security Deposit may be made in three payments -- one third in advance, one third with their second rent payment, and one third with their third rent payment. The Owner will hold this security deposit for the period the Resident occupies the dwelling unit. The Owner shall not use the Security Deposit for rent or other charges while the Resident is living in the dwelling unit.

Within 21 days after the Resident has permanently moved out of the dwelling unit, the Owner shall return the Security Deposit with interest at the rate provided by state law after deducting whatever amount is needed to pay the cost of:

- a. unpaid rent;
- b. repair of damages that exceed normal wear and tear as listed on the Move-Out Inspection Report; and
- c. other charges due under the Lease.

Interest begins to accrue on the first day of the month following the full payment of the Security Deposit and runs to the last day of the month in which the Owner returns the Security Deposit.

Resident must furnish the owner with a forwarding address with the notice to vacate.

The Owner shall provide the Resident with a written list of any charges made against the Security Deposit. If the Resident disagrees with the amounts deducted, the Owner will meet with the Resident to discuss the charges.

5. **OCCUPANCY:**

The Resident shall use the premises as a private dwelling for himself or herself and the persons named in of this Lease, with the exception of minor children born into the household during this tenancy, and shall not permit its use for any other purpose without the written permission of the Owner.

The Resident shall not:

- a. permit any persons other than those listed above and minor children which are born into the household during this tenancy, to reside in the dwelling unit for more than fourteen (14) days each year without obtaining the prior written approval of the Owner;

- b. sublet or assign the unit, or any part of the unit;
- c. engage in or permit unlawful activities in the unit, in the common areas, or on the property grounds;
- d. act or allow household members or guests to act in a manner that will disturb the rights or comfort of neighbors;
- e. permit any member of the household, a guest, or another person under the Resident's control to engage in any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or Authority employees;
- f. permit any member of the household, a guest, or another person under the Resident's control to engage in any violent or drug-related criminal activity on or off the premises;
- g. remove any batteries from a smoke detector or fail to notify the Owner if the smoke detector is inoperable for any reason. Notices of lease violation will be issued to residents who purposely disengage the unit's smoke detector. Only one warning will be given. A second incidence will result in lease termination; or
- h. be absent from the unit for more than 30 consecutive days. The Resident must give the Owner a 30 day written notice of intent to be absent from the unit.

With the written permission of the Owner, the Resident can incidentally use the premises for legally permissible income producing purposes so long as the business does not infringe on the rights of other Residents. All such business-related uses of the premises must meet all zoning requirements and the Resident must have the proper business licenses.

The Resident has the right to exclusive use and occupancy of the dwelling unit, which includes reasonable accommodation of the Resident's guests, visitors and, with the consent of the Owner, foster children and/or adults and the live-in care giver of the Resident's family.

**6. CONDITION OF DWELLING:**

By signing this Lease and the Unit Inspection Report, the Resident acknowledges that the dwelling unit is safe, clean and in good condition, and that all appliances and equipment in the dwelling unit are in good working order as described on the Move-in Unit Inspection Report. This report, signed by both the Resident and Owner, is attached to this Lease.

At the time of move out, the Owner shall complete another inspection of the dwelling unit. When the Resident notifies the Owner of his or her intent to vacate, the Owner shall advise the Resident of their opportunity to participate in the move-out inspection.

**7. UTILITIES:**

The Owner may provide the following utilities as a part of this lease agreement but shall not be liable for the failure to provide service if beyond its control:

**SCATTERED SITES:** The Resident is responsible for all utilities. If the Owner is required to pay for excess garbage or excess water or those amounts become attached to the Owner's property taxes due to actions by the tenant or due to non-payment by the tenant, the Owner will bill the tenant and the tenant must pay those amounts in full within 30 days of the notice. Failure to pay these amounts will result in termination of the lease.

**WHISPERING PINES:** The Owner is responsible for heat, electricity, water, sewer and trash removal.

The Owner does not allow portable dishwashers, space heaters, freezers and washer dryers. The Resident agrees not to waste any utilities provided by the Owner. During the cold weather season, the Resident will be fined for open windows in the unit.

The Utility Allowance Schedule for Resident Paid Utilities and the Schedule of Excess Utility Charges are posted in the Owner's office. The Resident shall pay any excess for utilities provided by the Owner and consumed in their unit over and above that set forth in the Schedule.

**8. RENT RECERTIFICATIONS:**

Residents are required to provide true and complete information at all times. Failure to do so is a material noncompliance with the lease subject to termination of the tenancy. In addition the Resident could become subject to penalties available under Federal law. Those penalties include fines up to \$10,000 and imprisonment for up to five years.

At the time of the review appointment the Resident may elect to change his or her rent choice option to either the flat rent option or the formula method option

**FLAT RENT OPTION:**

Under the flat rent option the Resident chooses to pay an amount for the rent that is established by the Owner and not dependent upon the Resident's income.

Income reviews will be held every third year for Residents choosing the flat rent option. The Resident who has chosen this option will be notified at the appropriate time for their re-certification. Residents who have chosen the flat rent option must complete recertification forms and the flat rent acknowledgement form annually. Failure to complete the required forms could result in termination of the lease.

The Resident may request a change in the rent choice option before the date of the review if the Resident experiences a decrease in income; circumstances have changed due to expenses for child care, medical, etc.; or other circumstances create a hardship on the Resident such that the formula method would be more financially feasible for the family.

**INCOME BASED OPTION (Formula Based):**



Under the Income Based Option the Resident pays 30% of the monthly adjusted income for rent.

Each year, by the date specified by the Owner, Residents who are paying rent based on their income shall provide updated information regarding income, assets, expenses, and family composition. The Owner shall verify the information supplied by the Resident and use the verified information to establish the amount of the Resident's rent for the next year. At the time of the annual review, the Owner shall advise the Resident of any income that will be excluded from consideration. Increased earnings due to employment shall be excluded during the twelve month period following hire for residents whose income has increased because of the employment of a family member who was previously unemployed for one or more years, because of participation in a self-sufficiency program or was assisted by a State TANF program within the last six months.

In cases where annual income cannot be projected for a twelve-month period or the Resident is reporting no income and Resident has chosen the income based option, the Owner will schedule rent reviews every ninety (90) days

Residents paying rent based on income may meet with the Owner to discuss any change in rent resulting from the re-certification process; and, if the Resident does not agree with the determination of Resident rent, the Resident may request a hearing in accordance with the Owner's grievance procedures.

**9. INTERIM RENT ADJUSTMENTS:**

Residents must report in writing to the Owner within 5 days of the change any of the following:

- a. A member has been added to the family through birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody.
- b. A household member is leaving or has left the family unit.
- c. Any increases in income or assets for all household members. An increase of \$300 per month or more in income will result in an increase in the Resident's rent portion. Residents paying flat rent are not required to report any increases in income or assets.

In addition, Residents using the income based option for rent may report the following activities that occur between Annual Rent Re-certifications:

- a. A decrease in annual income;
- b. Childcare expenses for children under the age of 13 that are necessary to enable a member of the household to be employed or to go to school;
- c. Handicapped assistance expenses, which enable a family member to work;
- d. Medical expenses of elderly or disabled headed households that are not covered by insurance;
- e. Cost of Living increases in social security; or
- e. Other family changes that impact their adjusted income.

Notwithstanding the provisions listed above, a Resident's rent shall not be reduced if the decrease in the family's annual income is caused by a reduction in the welfare or public assistance benefits received by the family that is a result of the Resident's failure to comply with the conditions of the assistance program requiring participation in an economic self-sufficiency program or other work activities. In addition, if the decrease in the family's annual income is caused by a reduction in welfare or public assistance benefits received by the family that is the result of an act of fraud, such decrease in income shall not result in a rent reduction. In such cases, the amount of income to be attributed to the family shall include what the family would have received had they complied with the welfare requirements or had not committed an act of fraud.

A Resident's rent will be reduced based on the reduction of welfare or public assistance benefits to a family that occurs as a result of the expiration of a time limit for the receipt of assistance. Reduction of assistance based on expiration of a time limit will not be considered a failure to comply with program requirements.

The Owner shall verify the information provided by the Resident to determine if a decrease in the rent is warranted.

10. **EFFECTIVE DATE OF RENT CHANGE FOR INTERIM RENT:**

The Owner shall give the Resident written notice of any change in the Resident's rent. The notice shall be signed by the Owner, state the new amount the Resident is required to pay, and the effective date of the new rental amount.

If the Resident's share of the rent is to increase:

The increase generally will be effective on the first of the month following a 30 day notice to the Resident, unless the Resident has caused a delay in the processing of the rent calculation by not coming to the first scheduled appointment or not supplying verifying information within 10 days of the written notice of change.

If a Resident fails to provide written notice of a change in income within 5 days of the change and the change would have resulted in an increase in rent portion or fails to provide information within 10 days of the required reporting period, the increase will be applied retroactively, to the date it would have been effective if the information would have been provided on a timely basis. The Owner may recover the rent due on the corrected effective date.

If the Resident's share is to decrease:

A request to decrease the Resident's rent portion must be made in writing. An Interim Rent Change is triggered by a decrease in the Resident's income that is reasonably expected to exist thirty (30) days or longer. This includes persons who are employed by a temporary staffing agency and who have not had an assignment or have had a change in hours or pay for 30 days or longer. The decrease will be effective on the first day of the month after a 21 day verification period. The 21 day verification period starts on whichever is later:

1) The written notification to the Owner from the Resident

OR

2) The date of the last payment received

The Resident will have 10 business days after the written notice of the change to submit the required information to the Owner.

If the Resident does not supply requested information in the twenty-one day time period then the interim rent change becomes effective the first of the month after the Resident has supplied the information.

Reporting a loss in child support:

The Interim Rent Change based on loss of child support will be calculated after one full month of not receiving child support. The change will be the first of the month after the one full month of not receiving child support. The family must certify in writing within 5 days of the change that child support has stopped and, if applicable, that no future payments are expected because the payor is incarcerated, deceased or similar circumstances.. If child support should begin again the Resident must report within 5 days of the change and the rent increase will go retroactive to the point of when it began again with a 30 day notice.

Once the rental rate is established, it shall remain in effect until the effective date of the next annual review, unless another interim review and change is warranted or the Resident elects to change to or from flat rent calculation method.

**11. RESIDENT OBLIGATION TO REPAY FOR INTERIM RENT:**

A Resident must pay the rent due under the Lease, and any increase calculated under Section 10 or that would have been calculated if the Resident had provided proper notice or information. Residents who pay rent based on income shall reimburse the Owner for the difference between the rent that was paid and the rent that should have been paid if proper notice of income change had been given and if the following circumstances occur:

- a. Resident does not submit verification information within 10 days of the written notice of change; or
- b. Resident submits false information at Admission or at annual, special, or interim review.

Resident is not required to reimburse the Owner for undercharges caused solely by the Owner's failure to follow U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's procedures for computing rent.

The Resident may be offered a repayment agreement. The repayment agreement may be up to eighteen months. The Resident will be required to make payments on time. Failure to make a payment will result in the default of the repayment agreement and at that time the full amount of the charges is due. Failure to pay the full amount is a

violation of the lease and will be terms for termination of the lease. The PHA may offer no more than one repayment agreement during a tenancy. The PHA may, in its sole discretion, provide another repayment agreement if the time between occurrences exceeds two years.

12. **MAINTENANCE:**  
The Resident Agrees To:

- a. keep the dwelling unit and any other areas assigned for the Resident's exclusive use in a clean and safe condition;
- b. use all appliances, fixtures and equipment in a safe manner and only for the purposes for which they are intended;
- c. not litter the grounds or common areas of the property;
- d. not undertake, or permit his or her family or guests to undertake any hazardous acts or do anything that will damage the property;
- e. not destroy, deface, damage or remove any part of the dwelling unit, common areas, or property grounds;
- f. give the Owner prompt notice of any defects in the plumbing, fixtures, appliances, heating equipment or any other part of the unit or related facilities;
- g. not park unregistered or un-approved vehicles on the property or park any vehicle in an unauthorized location. Resident may not work on vehicles on the property. All vehicles on premises must be licensed and in working condition.
- h. remove garbage and other waste from the dwelling unit in a clean and safe manner; all trash must be contained in sealed plastic bags. Common areas, if available and used by Resident or guests, must be left in a litter free condition.
- i. Arrange proper disposal of personal items such as sofas, chairs, TVs, microwaves, air conditioners, mattresses, etc. When leaving excessive trash, the Resident must coordinate with the Owner to pay the cost of removal.
- j. pay reasonable charges for the repair of damages other than normal wear and tear to the premises, development buildings, facilities or common areas caused by the Resident, his or her household or guests, and to do so within 30 days after the receipt of the Owner's itemized statement of the repair charges. The Damage and Service Charge Schedule is posted in the office. If the item is not listed on the Schedule, the Resident shall be charged the actual cost the Owner incurred. Failure to pay these amounts will result in termination of the lease.
- k. take reasonable precautions to prevent fires and to refrain from storing or keeping highly volatile or flammable materials. No candles are allowed.
- l. avoid obstructing sidewalks, passageways, stairs or, if available, elevators and to avoid using these areas for purposes other than going in or out of the unit. In Whispering Pines no carts or personal items are allowed in the hallways.
- m. Abide by the Housekeeping Standards set forth in the below. Failure to abide by the Housekeeping Standards resulting in the creation or maintenance of a threat to health and safety is a violation of the lease terms and can result in termination of the lease.

## Housekeeping Standards: Inside the Apartment

### General:

1. All Walls: should be clean, free of dirt, grease, holes, cobwebs and fingerprints.
2. All Floors: should be clean, free of wax build up, clear, dry and free of hazard. Stairs shall be free of clutter. Carpets shall be free of the accumulation of dirt, litter, paint, stains. Carpet shall be kept clean and sanitary.
3. All Ceilings: should be clean and free of cobwebs.
4. All Windows: should be clean and operable. Window tracks shall be free of dust, dirt and debris so that windows open and close smoothly. Window coverings such as shades, blinds, curtains, or drapes shall be clean, undamaged and in good condition.
5. All Woodwork: should be clean, free of dust, gouges, holes or scratches.
6. All Doors: should be clean, free of grease and fingerprints. Doorstops should be present. Locks should work.
7. All Heating units should be dusted and access uncluttered. Only cold air returns can be removed for cleaning.
8. Trash shall be disposed of properly and not left in the unit.
9. Entire unit should be free of rodent or insect infestation.

### Kitchen:

1. Stove and Oven: the outside and inside should be clean and free of food and grease. No foil in drip pans allowed. Resident will not line oven with foil.
2. Refrigerator: the outside and inside should be clean, free from food spills, sticky substances, spoiled food. Freezer door should close properly and freezer have no more than 1/4 inch of ice.
3. Cabinets and countertops: should be free of grease, grime, sticky substances, dust, paint, food spills and splatters. Cabinets should not be overloaded. Storage under the sink should be limited to small or lightweight items to permit access for repairs. Heavy pots and pans should not be stored under the sink.
4. Exhaust Fans: should be free of grease and dust.
5. Sink and plumbing fixtures: should be clean and free of grease and garbage.
6. Trash/Garbage should be stored in a covered container until removed to the disposal area. All wet garbage and discarded food must be wrapped and disposed of properly.

### Bathroom:

1. Toilet and tank, inside and outside: clean, stain free no lime build-up and odor free.
2. Tub and Shower: should be clean and free of excessive mildew and mold. Free from soap residue, lime build-up, dirt, or grime. Where applicable, shower curtains should be in place, and of adequate length.
3. Accessories such as towel bars, grab bars, faucets, counter tops should be clean and free from mold, dirt, lime build-up and grime.
4. Exhaust Fans: should be free of dust.
5. Floor: should be clean and dry.

### Storage Areas:

1. No volatile or flammable materials can be stored in the unit.

2. Perishable and non-perishable foods must be properly stored to minimize the risk of rodent and insect infestations.
3. Personal property must be stored in a manner that allows for easy access to shut-off valves and other service connections, proper air circulation and swift exit in case of emergency and in a manner that will not attract pests or create a health or fire hazard. Personal items must be neatly stored and placed in a manner that does not obstruct safe traffic flow.
4. If there is a basement or furnace room in the unit: Nothing can be placed within two feet of the furnace, water heater or vent pipes. This area must be free of dirt, litter, cobwebs or clutter. Clothes will not be strewn on the floor. Laundry must be stored in proper containers.

The Owner Agrees To:

- a. maintain the premises and the property in decent and safe condition;
- b. comply with requirements of applicable building codes, housing codes materially affecting health and safety, and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations;
- c. make necessary repairs to the premises;
- d. keep property buildings, facilities and common areas, not otherwise assigned to the Resident for maintenance and upkeep, in a clean and safe condition;
- e. maintain in good and safe working order and condition electrical, plumbing, sanitary, heating, ventilating, and other facilities and appliances, including elevators, supplied or required to be supplied by the Owner;
- f. provide and maintain appropriate receptacles and facilities for the deposit of garbage, rubbish, and other waste removed from the premises by the Resident; and
- g. supply running water and reasonable amounts of hot water and heat at appropriate times of the year (according to local customs and usage) except where heat or hot water is generated by an installation within the exclusive control of the Resident and supplied by a direct utility connection.

If the dwelling unit is rendered uninhabitable, regardless of cause:

- a. The Resident shall immediately notify the Owner;
- b. The Owner shall be responsible for repair of the unit within a reasonable time. If the Resident, household members or guests caused the damage, the reasonable cost of the repairs shall be charged to the Resident.
- c. The Owner shall offer standard alternative accommodations, if available, when necessary repairs cannot be made within a reasonable time.
- d. The Owner shall make a provision for rent abatement in proportion to the seriousness of the damage and loss in value if repairs are not made within a reasonable time. No abatement of rent shall occur if the Resident rejects the alternative accommodations or if the Resident, Resident's household, or guests caused the damage.

**12. RESTRICTION ON ALTERATIONS:**

The Resident shall not do any of the following without first obtaining the Owner's written permission:

- a. dismantle, change or remove any part of the appliances, fixtures or equipment in the dwelling unit;
- b. paint or install wallpaper or contact paper in the dwelling unit;
- c. attach awnings or window guards in the dwelling unit;
- d. attach or place any fixtures, signs, or fences on the building(s), the common areas, or the property grounds;
- e. attach any shelves, screen doors, or other permanent improvements in the dwelling unit;
- f. install or alter carpeting, resurface floors or alter woodwork;
- g. install washing machines, dryers, fans, heaters, or air conditioners in the dwelling unit;
- h. place any aerials, antennas or other electrical connections on the dwelling unit;
- i. install additional or different locks or gates on any doors or windows of the dwelling unit; or
- j. operate a business as an incidental use in the dwelling unit.
- k. Insert nails or any other personal items, i.e. exercise equipment, hooks or hangers of any sort in any exterior or interior doors.

13. **ACCESS BY OWNER:**

The Owner shall provide two (2) days written advance notice to the Resident of his or her intent to enter the dwelling unit for the purpose of performing routine inspections and preventive maintenance, extermination or to show the dwelling unit for re-renting. The notice shall specify the date, time, and purpose for the entry. The Resident shall permit the Owner, his or her agents, or other persons, when accompanied by the Owner, to enter the dwelling unit for these purposes. In the event that the Resident and all adult members of the household are absent from the dwelling unit at the time of entry, the Owner shall leave a card stating the date, time and name of the person entering the dwelling unit and the purpose of the visit. If Resident is absent from the dwelling unit when the Owner comes to perform requested maintenance, the Resident request shall constitute permission to enter.

The Owner may enter the dwelling unit at any time without advance notice when there is reasonable cause to believe an emergency exists. If a unit is empty because of an extended approved absence of more than 14 days, maintenance may enter the unit to ensure all systems are working properly. In that case, the Owner shall leave a card stating the date, time and name of the person entering the dwelling unit and the purpose of the visit.

15. **SIZE OF DWELLING:** The Resident understands that the Owner assigns dwelling units according to the Occupancy Standards published in its Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP). The Occupancy Standards consider the type (such as dwelling units designed for the elderly or handicapped) and size of the dwelling unit required by the number of household members. If the Resident is or becomes eligible for a different type or size dwelling unit and an appropriate dwelling unit under this program and under the Owner's transfer policy becomes available, the Resident shall be given a reasonable period of time to move. This time shall not exceed sixty (60) days unless an

unusual hardship condition exists. Resident agrees to accept a new lease for a different dwelling unit of the appropriate size or design. If the Resident fails to move to the designated dwelling unit within the notice period specified by the Owner, the Owner may terminate this lease.

If the Owner determines that a Resident must transfer to another unit based on family composition and occupancy standards, the Owner shall notify the Resident. The Resident may ask for an explanation stating the specific grounds of the determination, and if the Resident does not agree with the determination, the Resident may request a hearing in accordance with the Owner's grievance procedures.

The Owner may transfer a Resident to another unit if it is determined necessary to rehabilitate or demolish the Resident's unit.

If a Resident makes a written request for a special unit feature to accommodate a documented disability, the Owner shall reasonably consider the request to modify Resident's existing unit. If the cost and extent of the modifications needed are tantamount to those required for a fully accessible unit, the Owner may transfer the Resident to another unit with the features requested.

A Resident without disabilities that is housed in a unit with handicap accessible features must transfer to a different unit should a resident with disabilities require the special features in the accessible unit.

In the case of involuntary transfers, the Resident will be required to move into the dwelling unit made available by the Owner. Residents shall be given 60 days to move following delivery of a transfer notice. If Resident refuses to move, the Owner may terminate the lease.

Involuntary transfers are subject to the Grievance Procedure and may not be enforced until either the time to request a Grievance Hearing has expired or the Hearing has been completed.

The Owner will reject Resident requested transfers if the Resident owes the Owner money.

**16. LEASE TERMINATION BY OWNER:**

Any termination of this Lease shall be carried out in accordance with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations, State and local law, and the terms of this Lease.

The Owner shall not terminate or refuse to renew the Lease other than for serious or repeated violation of material terms of the Lease, such as, but not limited to, the following:

- a. nonpayment of rent or other charges due under the Lease (i.e. utilities, damages), or repeated chronic late payment of rent (four times in a twelve month period);



- b. failure to provide timely and accurate statements of income, assets, expenses and family composition at Admission, Interim, Special or Annual Rent Re-certifications or when required under the Lease or ACOP, to attend scheduled reexamination interviews or to cooperate in the verification process if the Resident has chosen to pay rent based on a percentage of income;
- c. failure to cooperate or provide accurate or complete information in the annual review if the Resident has chosen to pay flat rent.
- d. furnishing false or misleading information during the application or review process;
- e. assignment or subleasing of the premises or providing accommodation for boarders or lodgers;
- f. use of the premises for purposes other than solely as a dwelling unit for the Resident and Resident's household as identified in this Lease, or permitting its use for any other purpose without the written permission of the Owner;
- g. failure to abide by necessary and reasonable rules made by the Owner for the benefit and well being of the housing development and the Residents;
- h. failure to abide by applicable building and housing codes materially affecting health or safety;
- i. failure to dispose of garbage, waste and rubbish in a safe and sanitary manner;
- j. failure to use electrical, plumbing, sanitary, heating, ventilating, air conditioning and other equipment, including elevators, in a safe manner;
- k. acts of destruction, defacement or removal of any part of the premises, or failure to cause guests to refrain from such acts;
- l. failure to pay reasonable charges for the repair of damages to the premises, property buildings, facilities or common areas;
- m. failure to pay amounts for excess utilities that have been charged to the Owner;
- n. failure to abide by the provisions of the pet policy;
- o. any activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other Residents or employees of the Authority or other persons living in the immediate vicinity of the premises by the Resident or a guest of the Resident;
- p. any violent or drug-related criminal activity on or off the premises, not just on or near the premises. This includes any Resident, member of the Resident's household or guest and any such activity engaged in on the premises by any other person under the Resident's control;
- q. alcohol abuse that the Owner determines interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents;
- r. failure to perform required community service or be exempted there from;
- s. failure to allow inspection of the dwelling unit;
- t. determination that a family member has knowingly permitted an ineligible non-citizen not listed on the lease to permanently reside in their public housing unit;
- u. if a Resident is fleeing to avoid prosecution, custody or confinement after conviction of a crime:
- v. failure to complete any appointments with the Owner within three attempts;
- w. determination or discovery that a resident is a registered sex offender;
- x. determination that any member of the Resident's household has ever been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for the manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing;

y. any other good cause.

**17. NOTICE OF LEASE TERMINATION:**

If the Owner proposes to terminate this Lease, the Resident shall be given written notice of the proposed termination, as listed below:

- a. for failure to pay rent or other charges, at least fourteen (14) days;
- b. for creation or maintenance of a threat to health or safety of other Residents or Owner's employees, a reasonable time based on the urgency of the situation; or
- c. for all other cases, thirty (30) days, unless State law permits a shorter period.

The Notice to Vacate required by State or local law may be combined with or run concurrently with a Notice of Lease termination required by this lease.

The Notice of Lease Termination from the Owner shall be either personally delivered to the Resident or to an adult member of the Resident's family residing in the dwelling unit, or sent to the Resident by First Class Mail, properly addressed, postage pre-paid. The notice shall:

- a. specify the date the Lease shall be terminated;
- b. state the grounds for termination with enough detail for the Resident to prepare a defense. The Owner shall rely solely on the grounds stated in the Notice of Lease Termination in the event eviction action is initiated;
- c. advise the Resident of the right to reply as he or she may wish, to examine the Owner's documents directly relevant to the termination or eviction, to use the Grievance Policy to contest the termination, and/or to defend the action in court.

**18. LEASE TERMINATION BY RESIDENT:**

The Resident shall give the Owner 60 days written notice before moving from the dwelling unit. If the Resident does not give the full notice, the Resident shall be liable for rent to the end of the notice period or to the date the dwelling unit is re-rented, whichever date comes first. The Owner must receive the written notice at least two full rental periods before the last day of tenancy.

**19. TERMINATION OF LEASE UPON DEATH OR INCAPACITY OF RESIDENT:**

Upon the death of the Resident, or if there is more than one Resident, upon the death of all Residents, either the Owner or the personal representative of the Resident's estate may terminate this Lease upon 14 days written notice, to be effective on the last day of a calendar month. If full notice is not given, the Resident's estate shall be liable for rent to the end of the notice period or to the date the unit is re-rented, whichever date comes first. The termination of a Lease under this section shall not relieve the Resident's estate from liability either for payment of rent or other amounts owed prior to or during the notice period, or for the payment of amounts necessary to restore the premises to their condition at the beginning of the Resident's occupancy, normal wear and tear excepted.

If during the term of this Lease the Resident, by reason of physical or mental impairment, is no longer able to comply with the material provisions of this Lease and the Owner cannot make a reasonable accommodation to enable the Resident to comply with the

Lease; then action shall be taken. The Owner will assist the Resident or designated member(s) of the Resident's family to move the Resident to more suitable housing. If there are no family members, the Owner will work with appropriate agencies to secure suitable housing. This Lease will terminate upon the Resident moving from the unit.

20. **PROPERTY ABANDONMENT:** If a Resident abandons the dwelling unit, the Owner shall take possession of the Resident's personal property remaining on the premises, and shall store and care for the Resident's personal property. The Owner will consider the unit to be abandoned when a Resident has fallen behind in rent and has clearly indicated by words and actions an intention not to continue living in the unit. The Owner has a claim against the Resident for reasonable costs and expenses incurred in removing the property, in storing and caring for the property, and in selling the property. The Owner can collect from the Resident all these costs.

The Owner may sell or otherwise dispose of the Resident's personal property 60 days after the Owner receives actual notice of abandonment or 60 days after it reasonably appears to the Owner that the Resident has abandoned the premises, whichever date occurs last. At least 14 days prior to the sale, the Owner agrees to make reasonable efforts to notify the Resident of the sale by sending written notice of the sale by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Resident's last known address or likely living quarters if that is known by the Owner. The Owner shall also post a notice of sale in a clearly visible place on the premises for at least two weeks before the sale. The Owner may use the money from the sale to pay off any debts the Resident owes the Owner. Any amount above this belongs to the Resident, if the Resident has written and asked for it.

21. **DELIVERY OF NOTICES:**

Notice by Owner: Any notice from the Owner shall be in writing and either personally delivered to the Resident or to an adult member of the Resident's family residing in the dwelling unit, or sent to the Resident by Certified Mail, return receipt requested, properly addressed, postage pre-paid.

Notice by Resident: Any notice to the Owner shall be in writing, and either personally delivered to the office of the Owner's agent, Shelter Corporation, located at 14830 58<sup>th</sup> St. N. Stillwater, MN 55082, or sent to Shelter Corporation by first-class mail, postage pre-paid and addressed to:

Shelter Corporation  
c/o Raymie Johnson Estates  
14830 58<sup>th</sup> St. N.  
Stillwater, MN 55082

**Whispering Pines:** Notices to the Owner shall be in writing and either personally delivered to the office of the Owner's agent, Shelter Corporation, located at 7 5th Avenue NE, Forest Lake MN 55025. Notices may be sent to Shelter Corporation

By first class mail, postage pre-paid and addressed to:

Shelter Corporation  
c/o Whispering Pines  
7 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE  
Forest Lake, MN 55025

If the Resident is visually impaired, notices shall be in accessible format.

22. **GRIEVANCES:**

All individual grievances or appeals, with the exception of those cases concerning eviction or termination of tenancy which are based upon a Resident's creation or maintenance of a threat to health or safety of other Residents or Owner employees, shall be processed under the Grievance Policy. This policy is posted in the Owner's Agent's Office (Raymie Johnson Estates or Whispering Pines) where copies are available upon request.

Before the Owner shall schedule a Grievance Hearing for any grievance concerning the amount of rent the Owner claims is due, the Resident must first bring his or her rent account current by paying to the Owner an amount equal to the amount of rent due and payable as of the first of the month preceding the month in which the act or failure to act took place. After the hearing is scheduled, the Resident shall continue to deposit this same monthly rent amount into the Owner's escrow account until the complaint is resolved by the decision of the hearing officer or panel.

When the Owner is required to afford the Resident the opportunity for a hearing in accordance with the grievance procedure for a grievance concerning the Lease termination, the tenancy shall not terminate (even if any notice to vacate under State or local law has expired) until the time for the Resident to request a grievance hearing has expired, and (if a hearing was timely requested by the Resident) the grievance process has been completed.

23. **HOUSE RULES:**

The Resident agrees to obey any House Rules, which are reasonably related to the safety, care and cleanliness of the building and the safety, comfort and convenience of the Residents. Such rules may be modified by the Owner from time to time provided that the Resident receives written notice of the proposed change, reasons for the change and an opportunity to submit written comments during a 30 day comment period at least 30 days before the proposed effective date of the change in the Rule. Existing House Rules, if any, are posted at the office and are attached to this Lease.

24. **MOTOR VEHICLES (Whispering Pines Only):**

Residents with a valid driver's license will be assigned ONE parking space only on a space available basis. Under no circumstances will any vehicle, including two-wheeled motorized vehicles, be permitted to park any place other than the parking lot or public street. Resident further agrees to inform all visitors to park on the public street.

25. **PETS:**

The Resident will not move in a pet without prior written approval from the Owner. Pets are subject to the Pet Policy.

26. **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT PROTECTIONS:**

The Violence Against Women Act provides the following protections to public housing residents:

- a. the Owner will not terminate or refuse to renew the Lease and will not evict the Resident or a member of Resident's household from the dwelling unit if the Resident or household member is a victim of actual threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking as those terms are defined by the Admission and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP).
- b. under the Violence Against Women Act, the Owner may bifurcate this Lease in order to evict, remove or terminate assistance to any person who is a Resident or a lawful occupant under this lease when such person engages in criminal acts of physical violence against family members or others, on or off the premises. The Owner may take such action without evicting, removing, terminating assistance to, or otherwise penalizing a victim of such violence who is the Resident or is a lawful occupant under this Lease.
- c. notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in paragraphs a. and b. above, the Owner may terminate the Lease and evict the Resident if the Owner can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other residents or to Owner's employees at or providing goods or services to the site in which the unit is located, if the Resident's tenancy is not terminated.
- d. **Nothing in this section** shall prohibit the Owner from terminating the Lease and evicting the Resident based on any violation of this Lease not involving domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking against the Resident or household member.

27. **DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED:**

The Owner shall not discriminate based upon race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, handicap or disability, familial status, or recipients of public assistance and shall comply with all nondiscrimination requirements of Federal, State and local law.

28. **ATTACHMENTS TO THE LEASE:**

The Resident certifies that he/she has received a copy of this Lease and the following Attachments to this Lease, and understands that these Attachments are part of this Lease.

- 1.) A completed copy of the Application for Admission or Continued Occupancy Form, including income and rent calculations.
- 2.) Unit Inspection Report.
- 3.) House Rules/Housekeeping Standards

- 4.) Pet Policies
- 5.) Utility Allowance Schedule and Schedule of Excess Utility Surcharges.
- 6.) Signed copy of the designation of the Public Housing Unit as a Drug Free Zone.
- 7.) Emergency Contact Form
- 8.) Family Obligations
- 9.) Grounds for Denial or Termination of Assistance
- 10) Grievance Hearing Procedures.

Scattered Site: A copy of the Rules & Regulations of the Town Home Association of which the unit is a part if appropriate.

Whispering Pines:  
Key Fob Addendum.

Signatures:

RESIDENT: 1) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

OWNER: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Managing Agent for Washington  
County Community Development  
Agency--OWNER

### **Smoke-Free Lease Addendum For Whispering Pines**

Resident and all members of Resident's family or household are parties to a written lease with Management (the Lease). This Addendum states the following additional terms, conditions and rules which are hereby incorporated into the Lease. A breach of this Lease Addendum shall give each party all the rights contained herein, as well as the rights in the Lease.

**1. Purpose of No-Smoking Policy.** The parties desire to mitigate (i) the irritation and known health effects of secondhand smoke; (ii) the increased maintenance, cleaning, and redecorating costs from smoking; (iii) the increased risk of fire from smoking; (iv) the higher costs of fire insurance for a non-smoke-free building; and prohibit and prevent adverse health effects from electronic cigarettes.

**2. Smoking Cessations Products.** The lease addendum allows the use of smoking cessation products recognized by the American Lung Association or the United States Department of Health.

**3. Definitions:**

**Smoking.** The term "smoking" means inhaling, exhaling, breathing, burning or carrying any lighted or heated cigar, cigarette, or other tobacco product or plant/synthetic product in any manner or in any form. Smoking also includes use of an electronic cigarette.

**Electronic Cigarette.** The term "electronic cigarette" means any electronic device that provides a vapor of liquid nicotine and/or other substances to the user as she or he simulates smoking. The term shall include such devices whether they are manufactured or referred to as e-cigarettes, e-cigars, e-pipes or under any product name.

**4. Smoke-Free Complex.** Resident agrees and acknowledges that the premises to be occupied by Resident and members of Resident's household have been designated as a smoke-free living environment. Resident and members of Resident's household shall not smoke anywhere in the unit rented by Resident, or the building where the Resident's dwelling is located or in any of the common areas including all adjoining grounds, parking areas, green spaces, and outdoor areas of the rental community, nor shall Resident permit any guests or visitors under the control of Resident to do so. Smoking, as defined above, is prohibited in and on all areas of the rental community unless Management has specifically designated an outdoor area as a smoking area. Management has no duty or obligation to create or designate any area as a smoking area.

**5. Resident to Promote No-Smoking Policy and to Alert Management of Violations.**

Resident shall inform Resident's guests of the no-smoking policy. Further, Resident shall promptly give Management a written statement of any incident where tobacco smoke is migrating into the Resident's unit from sources outside of the Resident's apartment unit.

**6. Management to Promote No-Smoking Policy.** Management shall post no-smoking signs at entrances and exits, common areas, hallways, and in conspicuous places adjoining the grounds of the apartment complex.

**7. Management Not a Guarantor of Smoke-Free Environment.** Resident acknowledges that Management's adoption of a smoke-free living environment, and the efforts to designate the rental complex as smoke-free, do not make the Management or any of its managing agents the guarantor of Resident's health or of the smoke-free condition of the Resident's unit and the common areas. However, Management shall take reasonable steps to enforce the smoke-free terms of its leases and to make the complex smoke-free. Management is not required to take steps in response to smoking unless Management knows of said smoking or has been given written notice of said smoking.

**8. Other Residents are Third-Party Beneficiaries of Resident's Agreement.** Resident agrees that the other Residents at the complex are the third-party beneficiaries of Resident's smoke-free addendum agreements with Management. *(In layman's terms, this means that Resident's commitments in this Addendum are made to the other Residents as well as to Management.)* A Resident may sue another Resident for an injunction to prohibit smoking or for damages, but does not have the right to evict another Resident. Any suit between Residents herein shall not create a presumption that the Management breached this Addendum.

**9. Effect of Breach and Right to Terminate Lease.** Resident agrees and acknowledges that the entire premises to be occupied by Resident, and members of Resident's household, and guests, have been designated as smoke-free and that smoking as defined herein, is prohibited by Resident, members of Resident's household, and guests. Resident acknowledges that a breach of this agreement by Resident, or Resident's household members or guests, shall be considered a material breach of lease and grounds for termination of Resident's lease agreement. Management agrees to take reasonable and prompt action to enforce the lease and respond to any complaint made by Resident of a breach of the Smoke-Free Lease Addendum by another Resident, or that Resident's family members or guests. Management shall be given a reasonable period of time to take action to enforce the lease up to and through the time required to give a notice of violation of lease, to investigate and determine if the violation of



a lease has occurred or is continuing, and to proceed with a notice of termination of lease or eviction. The remedy of Resident against Management for an alleged failure to respond reasonably and promptly to enforce this Smoke-Free Lease Addendum shall be the right of Resident to terminate the lease, without penalty for giving longer notice as required by the lease, upon 14 days notice and a failure by Management to show the complaining Resident that Management is responding promptly to enforce the Smoke-Free Lease Addendum. Resident shall have no further remedy or claim against Management for an alleged failure to enforce the obligations of this Smoke-Free Lease Addendum and/or to remove or terminate any Resident, or Resident's guest, that is violating this Addendum.

**10. Disclaimer by Management.** Resident acknowledges that Management's adoption of a smoke-free living environment and the efforts to designate the rental complex as smoke-free do not in any way change the standard of care that the Management or managing agent would have to a Resident household to render buildings and premises designated as smoke-free any safer, more habitable, or improved in terms of air quality standards than any other rental premises. Management specifically disclaims any implied or express warranties that the building, common areas, or Resident's premises will have any higher or improved air quality standards than any other rental property. Management cannot and does not warranty or promise that the rental premises or common areas will be free from secondhand smoke. Resident acknowledges that Management's ability to police, monitor, or enforce the agreements of this Addendum is dependent in significant part on voluntary compliance by Resident and Resident's guests. Residents with respiratory ailments, allergies, or any other physical or mental condition relating to smoke are put on notice that Management does not assume any higher duty of care to enforce this Addendum than any other Management obligation under the Lease.

**11. Transition Notice.** New residents signing this Smoke-Free Lease Addendum, that have not previously lived at that property, are given notice that the rental community was previously operated as a community where smoking was permitted. The rental community is in the process of converting from a community where smoking is permitted to a smoke-free community. The transition period requires all new applicants and residents to sign this Smoke-Free Lease Addendum. Current Residents, and their guests, are not subject to the requirements of the Smoke-Free Lease Addendum until their leases comes up for renewal. It is anticipated that the transition from a community where smoking is permitted, to a smoke-free community, will last approximately 12 months and will not be completed until on or about May 31, 2016. New residents signing this Addendum, and current Residents signing renewal leases, acknowledge that the property will not be completely smoke-free until the transition is completed. The

signers of this Addendum, however, and their guests, are all bound by the language in this Addendum and it shall not be a defense or excuse to compliance with this Addendum, or enforcement by Management or other residents, that the community is still in the transition period.

**By signing below I agree to the terms above:**

_____ Resident Signature	_____ Printed Name	_____ Date
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_____ Resident Signature	_____ Printed Name	_____ Date
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_____ Management Witness	_____ Date
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## **Smoke Free Lease Addendum For Scattered Site Public Housing**

Resident and all members of Resident's family or household are parties to a written lease with Management (the Lease). This Addendum states the following additional terms, conditions and rules which are hereby incorporated into the Lease. A breach of this Lease Addendum shall give each party all the rights contained herein, as well as the rights in the Lease.

1. Purpose of No-Smoking Policy. The parties desire to mitigate the increased maintenance, cleaning, and redecorating costs from smoking and the increased risk of fire from smoking.

2.

Definitions:

Smoking. The term "smoking" means inhaling, exhaling, breathing, or carrying any lighted or heated cigar, cigarette, or other tobacco product or plant/synthetic product in any manner or in any form. Smoking also includes use of an electronic cigarette. This definition does not prohibit the use of smoking cessation products.

Electronic Cigarette. The term "electronic cigarette" means any electronic device that provides a vapor of liquid nicotine and/or other substances to the user as she or he simulates smoking. The term shall include such devices whether they are manufactured or referred to as e-cigarettes, e-cigars, e-pipes or under any product name.

3. Smoking Prohibited. Resident agrees and acknowledges that the premises rented by Resident and members of Resident's household which premises shall include any patio, balcony, or grounds associated with Resident's unit (such as the yard surrounding any single family home) are rented to Resident subject to this No-Smoking Lease Addendum. Resident, and Resident's guests, agree and promise not to smoke anywhere on the premises rented by Resident.

4. Resident to Enforce No-Smoking Agreement. Resident shall inform Resident's guests of the no-smoking obligation and take steps to require that visitors and guests refrain from smoking at Resident's premises.

5. Management Not a Guarantor of Smoke-Free Environment. Resident acknowledges that the rental units are part of a scattered site, public housing rental program that includes single family detached properties and 45 individual townhome units that are part of a larger, townhome community that includes multiple, individual, homeowner associations. The Washington County CDA, and Management, do not exclusively control or manage these

adjoining units or properties and cannot control or guaranty that secondhand smoke or smoking will not occur in adjoining townhome units or in outdoor common areas.

6. Effect of Breach and Right to Terminate Lease. Resident agrees and acknowledges that the entire premises to be occupied by Resident, and members of Resident's household, and guests, have been designated as no-smoking and that smoking as defined herein, is prohibited by Resident, members of Resident's household, and guests. Resident acknowledges that a breach of this agreement by Resident, or Resident's household members or guests, shall be considered a material breach of lease and grounds for termination of Resident's lease agreement.

7. Disclaimer by Management. Resident acknowledges that Management's adoption of a No- Smoking Lease Addendum and the efforts to designate the portions of the rental community owned or controlled by Washington County CDA and Management as non-smoking do not in

any way change the standard of care that Washington County CDA (WCCDA) or its managing agent would have to a Resident household to render buildings and premises any safer, more habitable, or improved in terms of air quality standards than any other rental premises. Management specifically disclaims any implied or express warranties that the building, common areas, or Resident's premises will have any higher or improved air quality standards than any other rental property. Management cannot and does not warranty or promise that the rental premises or common areas will be free from secondhand smoke. Resident is specifically advised and notified that adjoining units, and other portions of the rental community, may permit smoking as defined herein.

AGREED

TO:

RESIDENT

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

MANAGEMENT

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>EXHIBIT 8-1: SMOKE-FREE POLICY</b>
---------------------------------------

In accordance with HUD regulations, the Housing Authority has adopted these smoke-free policies. The policies are effective as of Board approval date 6/1/2016.

Due to the increased risk of fire, increased maintenance costs, and the known health effects of secondhand smoke, smoking is prohibited in all living units and interior areas, including but not limited to hallways, rental and administrative offices, community centers, day care centers, laundry centers, and similar structures. Smoking is also prohibited in outdoor areas within 25 feet from public housing and administrative office buildings.

This policy applies to all employees, residents, household members, guests, and service persons. Residents are responsible for ensuring that household members and guests comply with this rule.

The term “smoking” means any inhaling, exhaling, burning, or carrying any lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe, or other prohibited tobacco product in any manner or any form. Prohibited tobacco products include water pipes or hookahs.

Violation of the smoke-free policy constitutes a violation of the terms of the public housing lease. Consequences of lease violations include termination of tenancy.

## **PHA POLICIES**

### **Designated Smoking Areas (DSA)**

The PHA has not designated any smoking areas on the PHA’s property. Residents may not discard smoking products on the property.

## **Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS)**

Electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) include e-cigarettes, nicotine inhalers, and vaping devices.

Use of ENDS is not permitted in public housing units, common areas, or in outdoor areas on PHA property.

## **Effective Date**

The PHA's effective date(s) of this smoke-free policy is/are as follows:

The smoke-free policy will be effective for all residents, household members, employees, guests, and service persons on June 1, 2016.

## **Enforcement**

The PHA must enforce smoke-free policies when a resident violates this policy. When enforcing the lease, the PHA will provide due process and allow residents to exercise their right to an informal settlement and formal hearing. The PHA will not evict a resident for a single incident of smoking in violation of this policy. As such, the PHA will implement a graduated enforcement framework that includes escalating warnings. Prior to pursuing eviction for violation of smoke-free policies, the PHA will take specific, progressive monitoring and enforcement actions, while at the same time educating tenants and providing smoking cessation information. The lease will identify the actions that constitute a policy violation, quantify the number of documented, verified violations that warrant enforcement action, state any disciplinary actions that will be taken for persistent non-responsiveness or repeated noncompliance, and state how many instances of noncompliance will constitute a violation. Tenancy termination and eviction will be pursued only as a last resort. The PHA may terminate tenancy at any time for violations of the lease and failure to otherwise fulfill household obligations if resident behavior disturbs other residents' peaceful enjoyment and is not conducive to maintaining the property in a decent, safe, and sanitary condition.

Upon issuance of a written warning from the property manager and/or a documented complaint, the PHA may increase the frequency of unit inspections for a suspected policy violator to monthly.

The PHA will provide information and resources on smoking cessations information from the American Lung Association upon request from the tenant.

Repeated violation of the smoke-free policy may rise to the level of other good cause for termination of tenancy.

## **Chapter 9**

### **REEXAMINATIONS**

[24 CFR 960.257, 960.259, 966.4]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The PHA is required to reexamine each family's income and composition periodically, and to adjust the family's rent accordingly. PHAs must adopt policies for conducting annual and interim reexaminations that are consistent with regulatory requirements, and must conduct reexaminations in accordance with such policies [24 CFR 960.257(c)].

The frequency with which the PHA must reexamine the income and composition of a family depends on whether the family pays income-based rent or flat rent. HUD requires the PHA to offer all families the choice of paying income-based rent or flat rent at least annually. The PHA's policies for offering families a choice of rents are located in Chapter 6.

This chapter discusses both annual and interim reexaminations.

Part I: Annual Reexaminations for Families Paying Income Based Rents. This part discusses the requirements for annual reexamination of income and family composition. Full reexaminations are conducted at least once a year for families paying income-based rents.

Part II: Reexaminations for Families Paying Flat Rents. This part contains the PHA's policies for conducting full reexaminations of family income and composition for families paying flat rents. These full reexaminations are conducted at least once every 3 years. This part also contains the PHA's policies for conducting annual updates of family composition for flat rent families.

Part III: Interim Reexaminations. This part includes HUD requirements and PHA policies related to when a family may and must report changes that occur between annual reexaminations.

Part IV: Recalculating Tenant Rent. After gathering and verifying required information for an annual or interim reexamination, the PHA must recalculate the tenant rent. While the basic policies that govern these calculations are provided in Chapter 6, this part describes the policies that affect these calculations during a reexamination.

Policies governing reasonable accommodation, family privacy, required family cooperation, and program abuse, as described elsewhere in this ACOP, apply to annual and interim reexaminations.





## **PART I: ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS FOR FAMILIES PAYING INCOME-BASED RENTS [24 CFR 960.257]**

### **9-I.A. OVERVIEW**

For those families who choose to pay income-based rent, the PHA must conduct a reexamination of income and family composition at least annually [24 CFR 960.257(a)(1)]. For families who choose flat rents, the PHA must conduct a reexamination of family composition at least annually, and must conduct a reexamination of family income at least once every 3 years [24 CFR 960.257(a)(2)]. Policies related to the reexamination process for families paying flat rent are located in Part II of this chapter.

For all residents of public housing, whether those residents are paying income-based or flat rents, the PHA must conduct an annual review of community service requirement compliance. This annual reexamination is also a good time to have residents sign consent forms for criminal background checks in case the criminal history of a resident is needed at some point for the purposes of lease enforcement or eviction.

The PHA is required to obtain all of the information necessary to conduct reexaminations. How that information will be collected is left to the discretion of the PHA. Families are required to provide current and accurate information on income, assets, allowances and deductions, family composition and community service compliance as part of the reexamination process [24 CFR 960.259].

This part contains the PHA's policies for conducting annual reexaminations.

### **9-I.B STREAMLINED ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS [24 CFR 960.257]**

HUD permits PHAs to streamline the income determination process for family members with fixed sources of income. While third-party verification of all income sources must be obtained during the intake process and every three years thereafter, in the intervening years the PHA may determine income from fixed sources by applying a verified cost of living adjustment (COLA) or rate of interest. The PHA may, however, obtain third-party verification of all income, regardless of the source. Further, upon request of the family, the PHA must perform third-party verification of all income sources.

Fixed sources of income include Social Security and SSI benefits, pensions, annuities, disability or death benefits, and other sources of income subject to a COLA or rate of interest. The determination of fixed income may be streamlined even if the family also receives income from other non-fixed sources.

Two streamlining options are available, depending upon the percentage of the family's income that is received from fixed sources. If at least 90 percent of the family's income is from fixed sources, the PHA may streamline the verification of fixed income and but is not required to verify non-fixed income amounts in years. If the family receives less than 90 percent of its income from fixed sources, the PHA may streamline the verification of fixed income and must verify non-fixed income annually.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA may streamline the annual reexamination process by applying the verified COLA or interest rate to fixed-income sources. The PHA will document in the file how the determination that a source of income was fixed was made.

If a family member with a fixed source of income is added, the PHA will use third-party verification of all income amounts for that family member.

If verification of the COLA or rate of interest is not available, the PHA will obtain third-party verification of income amounts.

Third-party verification of fixed sources of income will be obtained during the intake process and at least once every three years thereafter.

Third-party verification of non-fixed income will be obtained annually regardless of the percentage of family income received from fixed sources.

### **9-I.C. SCHEDULING ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS**

The PHA must establish a policy to ensure that the annual reexamination for each family paying an income-based rent is completed within a 12 month period [24 CFR 960.257(a)(1)].

#### **PHA Policy**

Generally, the PHA will schedule annual reexaminations to coincide with the family's anniversary date. The PHA will begin the annual reexamination process approximately 120 days in advance of the scheduled effective date.

*Anniversary date* is defined as 12 months from the effective date of the family's last annual reexamination or, during a family's first year in the program, from the effective date of the family's initial examination (admission).

If the family transfers to a new unit, the PHA will perform a new annual reexamination, and the anniversary date will be changed.

The PHA may also schedule an annual reexamination for completion prior to the anniversary date for administrative purposes.

## **Notification of and Participation in the Annual Reexamination Process**

The PHA is required to obtain information needed to conduct annual reexaminations. How that information will be collected is left to the discretion of the PHA. However, PHAs should give tenants who were not provided the opportunity to provide contact information at the time of admission the option to complete Form HUD-92006 at this time. The PHA should provide the family with the opportunity to update, change, or remove information from the HUD-92006 at the time of the annual reexamination [Notice PIH 2009-36].

### **PHA Policy**

Families are required to participate in an annual reexamination interview, which must be attended by all adult members of the household. If participation in an in-person interview poses a hardship because of a family member's disability, the family should contact the PHA to request a reasonable accommodation.

Notification of annual reexamination interviews will be sent by first-class mail and will contain the date, time, and location of the interview. In addition, it will inform the family of the information and documentation that must be brought to the interview.

If the family is unable to attend a scheduled interview, the family should contact the PHA in advance of the interview to schedule a new appointment. In all circumstances, if a family does not attend the scheduled interview the PHA will send a second notification with a new interview appointment time. The family may reschedule an appointment but that is still considered an attempt. The family is allowed three attempts to complete an appointment.

If three attempts have been unsuccessful to complete an appointment, the family will be in violation of their lease and may be terminated in accordance with the policies in Chapter 13.

An advocate, interpreter, or other assistant may assist the family in the interview process.

## **9-I.D. CONDUCTING ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS**

The terms of the public housing lease require the family to furnish information regarding income and family composition as may be necessary for the redetermination of rent, eligibility, and the appropriateness of the housing unit [24 CFR 966.4(c)(2)].

### PHA Policy

Families will be asked to bring all required information (as described in the reexamination notice) to the reexamination appointment. The required information will include a PHA-designated reexamination form, an Authorization for the Release of Information/Privacy Act Notice, as well as supporting documentation related to the family's income, expenses, and family composition.

Any required documents or information that the family is unable to provide at the time of the interview must be provided within 10 business days of the interview. If the family is unable to obtain the information or materials within the required time frame, the family may request an extension.

If the family does not provide the required documents or information within the required time frame (plus any extensions), the family will be in violation of their lease and may be terminated in accordance with the policies in Chapter 13.

The information provided by the family generally must be verified in accordance with the policies in Chapter 7. Unless the family reports a change, or the agency has reason to believe a change has occurred in information previously reported by the family, certain types of information that are verified at admission typically do not need to be re-verified on an annual basis. These include:

- Legal identity
- Age
- Social security numbers
- A person's disability status
- Citizenship or immigration status

## **Change in Unit Size**

Changes in family or household composition may make it appropriate to consider transferring the family to comply with occupancy standards. The PHA may use the results of the annual reexamination to require the family to move to an appropriate size unit [24 CFR 960.257(a)(4)]. Policies related to such transfers are located in Chapter 12.

## **Criminal Background Checks**

Information obtained through criminal background checks may be used for lease enforcement and eviction [24 CFR 5.903(e)(1)(ii)]. Criminal background checks of residents will be conducted in accordance with the policy in Chapter 13-IV.B.

### PHA Policy

Each household member age 18 and over will be required to execute a consent form for a criminal background check as part of the annual reexamination process dependent upon the answers given on the recertification form.

Additionally, HUD recommends that at annual reexaminations PHAs ask whether the tenant, or any member of the tenant's household, is subject to a lifetime sex offender registration requirement in any state [Notice PIH 2012-28].

### PHA Policy

At the annual reexamination, the PHA will ask whether the tenant, or any member of the tenant's household, is subject to a lifetime sex offender registration requirement in any state. The PHA will use the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender database to verify the information provided by the tenant.

If the PHA proposes to terminate assistance based on lifetime sex offender registration information, the PHA must notify the household of the proposed action and must provide the subject of the record and the tenant a copy of the record and an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information prior to termination. [24 CFR 5.903(f) and 5.905(d)]. (See Chapter 13).

## **Compliance with Community Service**

For families who include nonexempt individuals, the PHA must determine compliance with community service requirements once each 12 months [24 CFR 960.257(a)(3)].

See Chapter 11 for the PHA's policies governing compliance with the community service requirement.

## 9-I.E. EFFECTIVE DATES

As part of the annual reexamination process, the PHA must make appropriate adjustments in the rent after consultation with the family and upon verification of the information [24 CFR 960.257(a)].

### PHA Policy

In general, an *increase* in the tenant rent that results from an annual reexamination will take effect on the family's anniversary date, and the family will be notified at least 30 days in advance.

If less than 30 days remain before the scheduled effective date, the increase will take effect on the first of the month following the end of the 30-day notice period. However, if the family has delayed calculation by not supplying requested information in a timely manner, then *increases* in the family share of the rent will be applied retroactively, to the scheduled effective date of the annual reexamination. If the PHA has had to schedule a second appointment this will constitute proof of the family causing a delay in the processing of the annual re-examination.

In the Family Obligations, the family is notified that at the annual recertification appointment that the rent portion may change depending on income on the anniversary date. If the PHA chooses to schedule an annual reexamination for completion prior to the family's anniversary date for administrative purposes, the effective date will be determined by the PHA, but will typically allow for the 30-day notice period, unless the family causes a delay..

The family will be responsible for any underpaid rent and may be offered a repayment agreement in accordance with the policies in Chapter 16.

In general, a *decrease* in the tenant rent that results from an annual reexamination will take effect on the family's anniversary date.

If the PHA chooses to schedule an annual reexamination for completion prior to the family's anniversary date for administrative purposes, the effective date will be determined by the PHA.

If the family causes a delay in processing the annual reexamination, *decreases* in the family share of the rent will be applied prospectively, from the first day of the month following completion of the reexamination processing. If the PHA sends a second appointment notice letter this will constitute evidence of the family causing a delay in the processing of the annual re-examination.

Delays in reexamination processing are considered to be caused by the family if the family fails to provide information requested by the PHA by the date specified, and this delay prevents the PHA from completing the reexamination as scheduled.





## **PART II: REEXAMINATIONS FOR FAMILIES PAYING FLAT RENTS [24 CFR 960.257(2)]**

### **9-II.A. OVERVIEW**

HUD requires that the PHA offer all families the choice of paying income-based rent or flat rent at least annually. The PHA's policies for offering families a choice of rents are located in Chapter 6.

For families who choose flat rents, the PHA must conduct a reexamination of family composition at least annually, and must conduct a reexamination of family income at least once every 3 years [24 CFR 960.257(a)(2)]. The PHA is only required to provide the amount of income-based rent the family might pay in those years that the PHA conducts a full reexamination of income and family composition, or upon request of the family after the family submits updated income information [24 CFR 960.253(e)(2)].

As it does for families that pay income-based rent, the PHA must also review compliance with the community service requirement for families with nonexempt individuals.

This part contains the PHA's policies for conducting reexaminations of families who choose to pay flat rents.

### **9-II.B. FULL REEXAMINATION OF FAMILY INCOME AND COMPOSITION**

#### **Frequency of Reexamination**

##### PHA Policy

For families paying flat rents, the PHA will conduct a full reexamination of family income and composition once every 3 years.

The family must complete the recertification forms and the one page flat rent acknowledgement annually. Failure to complete the required forms could result in termination of the lease.

#### **Reexamination Policies**

##### PHA Policy

In conducting full reexaminations for families paying flat rents, the PHA will follow the policies used for the annual reexamination of families paying income-based rent as set forth in Sections 9-I.B through 9-I.D above.

### **9-II.C. REEXAMINATION OF FAMILY COMPOSITION (“ANNUAL UPDATE”)**

As noted above, full reexaminations are conducted every 3 years for families paying flat rents. In the years between full reexaminations, regulations require the PHA to conduct a reexamination of family composition (“annual update”) [24 CFR 960.257(a)(2)].

The annual update process is similar to the annual reexamination process, except that the PHA does not collect information about the family’s income and expenses, and the family’s rent is not recalculated following an annual update.

#### **Scheduling**

The PHA must establish a policy to ensure that the reexamination of family composition for families choosing to pay the flat rent is completed at least annually [24 CFR 960.257(a)(2)].

##### PHA Policy

For families paying flat rents, annual updates will be conducted in each of the 2 years following the full reexamination.

In scheduling the annual update, the PHA will follow the policy used for scheduling the annual reexamination of families paying income-based rent as set forth in Section 9-I.B. above.

#### **Conducting Annual Updates**

The terms of the public housing lease require the family to furnish information necessary for the redetermination of rent and family composition [24 CFR 966.4(c)(2)].

##### PHA Policy

Generally, the family will not be required to attend an interview for an annual update. However, if the PHA determines that an interview is warranted, the family may be required to attend.

Notification of the annual update will be sent by first-class mail and will inform the family of the information and documentation that must be provided to the PHA. The family will have 10 business days to submit the required information to the PHA. If the family is unable to obtain the information or documents within the required time frame, the family may request an extension. The PHA will accept required documentation by mail, by fax, or in person.

If the family’s submission is incomplete, or the family does not submit the information in the required time frame, the PHA will send a second written notice to the family. The family will have 10 business days from the date of the second notice to provide the missing information or documentation to the PHA.

If the family does not provide the required documents or information within the required time frame (plus any extensions), the family will be in violation of their lease and may be terminated in accordance with the policies in Chapter 13.

### ***Change in Unit Size***

Changes in family or household composition may make it appropriate to consider transferring the family to comply with occupancy standards. The PHA may use the results of the annual update to require the family to move to an appropriate size unit [24 CFR 960.257(a)(4)]. Policies related to such transfers are located in Chapter 12.

### ***Criminal Background Checks***

Information obtained through criminal background checks may be used for lease enforcement and eviction [24 CFR 5.903(e)]. Criminal background checks of residents will be conducted in accordance with the policy in Section 13-IV.B.

#### **PHA Policy**

Each household member age 18 and over may be required to execute a consent form for criminal background check as part of the annual update process dependent upon the information provided in the recertification form.

The PHA will conduct a Dru Sjodin State Life Time Sex Offender search on all adults every year.

### ***Compliance with Community Service***

For families who include nonexempt individuals, the PHA must determine compliance with community service requirements once each 12 months [24 CFR 960.257(a)(3)].

See Chapter 11 for the PHA's policies governing compliance with the community service requirement.



## **PART III: INTERIM REEXAMINATIONS [24 CFR 960.257; 24 CFR 966.4]**

### **9-III.A. OVERVIEW**

Family circumstances may change during the period between annual reexaminations. HUD and PHA policies define the types of information about changes in family circumstances that must be reported, and under what circumstances the PHA must process interim reexaminations to reflect those changes. HUD regulations also permit the PHA to conduct interim reexaminations of income or family composition at any time.

In addition to specifying what information the family must report, HUD regulations permit the family to request an interim determination if other aspects of the family's income or composition change. The PHA must complete the interim reexamination within a reasonable time after the family's request.

This part includes HUD and PHA policies that describe the changes families are *required* to report, the changes families *may choose* to report, and how the PHA will process both PHA- and family-initiated interim reexaminations.

### **9-III.B. CHANGES IN FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION**

The PHA must adopt policies prescribing when and under what conditions the family must report changes in family composition. However, due to provisions of the public housing lease, the PHA has limited discretion in this area.

Changes in family or household composition may make it appropriate to consider transferring the family to comply with occupancy standards. Policies related to such transfers are located in Chapter 12.

#### **PHA Policy**

All families, those paying income-based rent as well as flat rent, must report in writing within 5 days of the change all changes in family and household composition that occur between annual reexaminations (or annual updates).

The PHA will conduct interim reexaminations to account for any changes in household composition that occur between annual reexaminations.

#### **New Family Members Not Requiring Approval**

The addition of a family member as a result of birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody does not require PHA approval. However, the family is required to promptly notify the PHA of the addition [24 CFR 966.4(a)(1)(v)].

#### **PHA Policy**

The family must inform the PHA in writing of the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child within 5 days..

## **New Family and Household Members Requiring Approval**

With the exception of children who join the family as a result of birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody, a family must request PHA approval to add a new family member [24 CFR 966.4(a)(1)(v)] or other household member (live-in aide or foster child) [24 CFR 966.4(d)(3)].

The PHA may adopt reasonable policies concerning residence by a foster child or a live-in aide, and defining the circumstances in which PHA consent will be given or denied. Under such policies, the factors considered by the PHA may include [24 CFR 966.4(d)(3)(i)]:

- Whether the addition of a new occupant may necessitate a transfer of the family to another unit, and whether such units are available.
- The PHA's obligation to make reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities.

### **PHA Policy**

Families must request in writing PHA approval to add a new family member, live-in aide, foster child, or foster adult. This includes any person not on the lease who is expected to stay in the unit for more than 14 consecutive days or a total of 30 cumulative calendar days during any 12-month period and therefore no longer qualifies as a "guest." Requests must be made in writing and approved by the PHA prior to the individual moving into the unit. The new family member must be in the unit 12 consecutive months before consideration will be given to requests to transfer to a larger unit.

The PHA will not approve the addition of new family or household members other than by birth, adoption, court-awarded custody, or marriage, if it will require the family to transfer to a larger size unit (under the transfer policy in Chapter 12), unless the family can demonstrate that there are medical needs or other extenuating circumstances, including reasonable accommodation, that should be considered by the PHA. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

The PHA will not approve the addition of a new family or household member unless the individual meets the PHA's eligibility criteria (see Chapter 3) and documentation requirements (See Chapter 7, Part II).

If the PHA determines that an individual does not meet the PHA's eligibility criteria or documentation requirements, the PHA will notify the family in writing of its decision to deny approval of the new family or household member and the reasons for the denial.

The PHA will make its determination within 10 business days of receiving all information required to verify the individual's eligibility.

## **Departure of a Family or Household Member**

### **PHA Policy**

If a family member ceases to reside in the unit, the family must inform the PHA in writing within 5 days. This requirement also applies to family members who had been considered temporarily absent, who are now permanently absent.

If a live-in aide, foster child, or foster adult ceases to reside in the unit, the family must inform the PHA in writing within 5 days.

### **9-III.C. CHANGES AFFECTING INCOME OR EXPENSES**

Interim reexaminations can be scheduled either because the PHA has reason to believe that changes in income or expenses may have occurred, or because the family reports a change. When a family reports a change, the PHA may take different actions depending on whether the family reported the change voluntarily, or because it was required to do so.

#### **PHA Policy**

This section only applies to families paying income-based rent. Families paying flat rent are not required to report changes in income or expenses.

#### **PHA-initiated Interim Reexaminations**

PHA-initiated interim reexaminations are those that are scheduled based on circumstances or criteria defined by the PHA. They are not scheduled because of changes reported by the family.

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will conduct interim reexaminations in each of the following instances:

For families receiving the Earned Income Disallowance (EID), the PHA will conduct an interim reexamination at the start, to adjust the exclusion with any changes in income, and at the conclusion of the 24 month eligibility. If the family has reported zero income, the family is required to report in writing any income within 5 days. Failure to report income is a violation of Family Obligations and could result in termination of the lease.

If at the time of the annual reexamination, it is not feasible to anticipate a level of income for the next 12 months (e.g. seasonal or cyclic income), the PHA will schedule an interim reexamination to coincide with the end of the period for which it is feasible to project income.

If at the time of the annual reexamination, tenant declarations were used on a provisional basis due to the lack of third-party verification, and third-party verification becomes available, the PHA will conduct an interim reexamination.

The PHA may conduct an interim reexamination at any time in order to correct an error in a previous reexamination, or to investigate a tenant fraud complaint.

## **Family-Initiated Interim Reexaminations**

The PHA must adopt policies prescribing when and under what conditions the family must report changes in family income or expenses [24 CFR 960.257(c)]. In addition, HUD regulations require that the family be permitted to obtain an interim reexamination any time the family has experienced a change in circumstances since the last determination [24 CFR 960.257(b)].

### ***Required Reporting***

HUD regulations give the PHA the discretion to determine the circumstances under which families will be required to report changes affecting income.

#### PHA Policy

Families are required to report in writing all increases in earned income, including new employment, within 5 days of the date the change takes effect.

The PHA will conduct interim reexaminations for families that qualify for the earned income disallowance (EID), and only when the EID family's rent will change as a result of the increase or if the income disallowance percentage is changing.

The PHA will conduct an interim rent change when household income increases by \$300 or more per month.

### ***Optional Reporting***

The family may request an interim reexamination any time the family has experienced a change in circumstances since the last determination [24 CFR 960.257(b)]. The PHA must process the request if the family reports a change that will result in a reduced family income [PH Occ GB, p. 159].

If a family reports a decrease in income from the loss of welfare benefits due to fraud or non-compliance with a welfare agency requirement to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program, the family's share of the rent will not be reduced [24 CFR 5.615]. For more information regarding the requirement to impute welfare income see Chapter 6.

#### PHA Policy

If a family reports a change that it was not required to report and that would result in a decrease in the tenant rent, the PHA will conduct an interim reexamination. See Section 9-III.D. for effective dates.

Families must report changes in writing for income or expenses at any time.



## 9-III.D. PROCESSING THE INTERIM REEXAMINATION

### Method of Reporting

#### PHA Policy

The family must notify the PHA of changes in writing within 5 days of the change. The family will have 10 business days after the written notice to submit the required information to the PHA. The family will be required to attend an interview for an interim reexamination.

Based on the type of change reported, the PHA will determine the documentation the family will be required to submit. The family must submit any required information or documents within 10 business days of receiving a request from the PHA. This time frame may be extended for good cause with PHA approval. The PHA will accept required documentation by mail, by fax, email, or in person.

### Effective Dates

The PHA must make the interim reexamination within a reasonable time after the family request [24 CFR 960.257(b)].

#### PHA Policy

If the family share of the rent is to *increase*:

The increase generally will be effective on the first of the month following 30 days' notice to the family.

If a family fails to report a change within the required time frames, or fails to provide all required information within the required time frames, the increase will be applied retroactively, to the date it would have been effective had the information been provided on a timely basis. The family will be responsible for any underpaid rent and may be offered a repayment agreement in accordance with the policies in Chapter 16.

If the family share of the rent is to *decrease*:

An interim rent change is triggered by a decrease in household income that is expected to exist thirty (30) days or longer. This includes persons who are employed by a temporary staffing agency and who have not had an assignment or have had a change in hours or pay for 30 days or longer. The decrease will be effective on the first day of the month after a 21 day verification period. The 21 day verification period starts on whichever is later:

1) The written notification to the CDA from the tenant

OR

2) The date of the last payment received.

The PHA may shorten or waive the 21 day verification period if the family is in danger of the PHA filing an unlawful detainer for non-payment of rent caused by the reported loss of income.

If the tenant does not respond to written requests for information from the PHA within the 21 day time period, then the PHA may close the request with a written notice to the tenant containing language regarding an informal grievance procedure and the ability to request a reasonable accommodation. The tenant must renew the request with a new 21 day verification period if a change is again requested or renewed. If the tenant does not supply all requested information in the twenty-one day time period then the interim rent change becomes effective the first of the month after the tenant has supplied the information.

Persons who report a loss in child support:

The interim rent change based on loss of child support will be calculated after one full month of not receiving child support. The change will be the first of the month after the one full month of not receiving child support. The family must certify in writing within 5 days of the change that child support has stopped and, if applicable, that no future payments are expected because the payor is incarcerated or deceased. If child support should begin again the tenant must report within 5 days of the change. The increase generally will be effective on the first of the month following 30 days' notice to the family.



## **PART IV: RECALCULATING TENANT RENT**

### **9-IV.A. OVERVIEW**

For those families paying income-based rent, the PHA must recalculate the rent amount based on the income information received during the reexamination process and notify the family of the changes [24 CFR 966.4, 960.257]. While the basic policies that govern these calculations are provided in Chapter 6, this part lays out policies that affect these calculations during a reexamination.

### **9-IV.B. CHANGES IN UTILITY ALLOWANCES [24 CFR 965.507, 24 CFR 966.4]**

The tenant rent calculations must reflect any changes in the PHA's utility allowance schedule [24 CFR 960.253(c)(3)]. Chapter 16 discusses how utility allowance schedules are established.

#### PHA Policy

Revised utility allowances will be applied to a family's rent calculations at the first annual reexamination after the allowance is adopted.

### **9-IV.C. NOTIFICATION OF NEW TENANT RENT**

The public housing lease requires the PHA to give the tenant written notice stating any change in the amount of tenant rent, and when the change is effective [24 CFR 966.4(b)(1)(ii)].

When the PHA redetermines the amount of rent (Total Tenant Payment or Tenant Rent) payable by the tenant, not including determination of the PHA's schedule of Utility Allowances for families in the PHA's Public Housing Program, or determines that the tenant must transfer to another unit based on family composition, the PHA must notify the tenant that the tenant may ask for an explanation stating the specific grounds of the PHA determination, and that if the tenant does not agree with the determination, the tenant shall have the right to request a hearing under the PHA's grievance procedure [24 CFR 966.4(c)(4)].

#### PHA Policy

The notice to the family will include the annual and adjusted income amounts that were used to calculate the tenant rent.

#### **9-IV.D. DISCREPANCIES**

During an annual or interim reexamination, the PHA may discover that information previously reported by the family was in error, or that the family intentionally misrepresented information. In addition, the PHA may discover errors made by the PHA. When errors resulting in the overpayment or underpayment of rent are discovered, corrections will be made in accordance with the policies in Chapter 15.

## Chapter 10

### PETS

[24 CFR 5, Subpart C; 24 CFR 960, Subpart G]

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the PHA's policies on the keeping of pets and describes any criteria or standards pertaining to the policies. The rules adopted are reasonably related to the legitimate interest of the PHA to provide a decent, safe and sanitary living environment for all tenants, and to protect and preserve the physical condition of the property, as well as the financial interest of the PHA.

The chapter is organized as follows:

Part I: Assistance Animals. This part explains the difference between assistance animals, including service and support animals, and pets and contains policies related to the designation of an assistance animal as well as their care and handling.

Part II: Pet policies for all developments. This part includes pet policies that are common to both elderly/disabled developments and general occupancy developments.

Part III: Pet deposits and fees for elderly/disabled developments. This part contains policies for pet deposits and fees that are applicable to elderly/disabled developments.

Part IV: Pet deposits and fees for general occupancy developments. This part contains policies for pet deposits and fees that are applicable to general occupancy developments.







## **PART I: SERVICE ANIMALS AND ASSISTANCE ANIMALS**

[Section 504; Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C.); 24 CFR 5.303; 24 CFR 960.705; Notice FHEO 2013-01]

### **10-I.A. OVERVIEW**

This part discusses situations under which permission for an assistance animal, including service and support animals, may be denied, and also establishes standards for the care of assistance animals.

Notice FHEO 2020-01 was published January 28, 2020. The notice provides guidance to help PHAs and other housing providers distinguish between a person with a non-obvious disability who has a legitimate need for an assistance animal and a person without a disability who simply wants to have a pet or avoid the costs and limitations imposed by the PHA's pet policies. FHEO 2020-01 makes clear that the notice is guidance and a tool for PHAs and other housing providers to use at their discretion and provides a set of best practices for addressing requests for assistance animals. The guidance in FHEO 2020-01 should be read together with HUD's regulations prohibiting discrimination under the Fair Housing Act (FHA) and the HUD/Department of Justice (DOJ) Joint Statement on Reasonable Accommodation under the Fair Housing Act. Housing providers may also be subject to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and should therefore refer also to DOJ's regulations implementing Titles II and III of the ADA at 28 CFR Parts 35 and 36, in addition to DOJ's other guidance on assistance animals.

There are two types of assistance animals: (1) service animals, and (2) other animals that do work, perform tasks, provide assistance, and/or provide therapeutic emotional support for individuals with disabilities (i.e., support animals).

Assistance animals, including service and support animals, are not pets and thus are not subject to the PHA's pet policies described in Parts II through IV of this chapter [24 CFR 5.303; 960.705; Notice FHEO 2020-01].

## **10-I.B. APPROVAL OF ASSISTANCE ANIMALS [Notice FHEO 2020-01]**

### **Service Animals**

Notice FHEO 2020-01 states that PHAs should initially follow the Department of Justice (DOJ) analysis to assessing whether an animal is a service animal under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Under the ADA, a *service animal* means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability.

As a best practice, housing providers may use the following questions to help them determine if an animal is a service animal under the ADA:

- Is the animal a dog? If not, the animal is not a service animal but may be another type of assistance animal for which an accommodation is needed (support animal).
- Is it readily apparent that the dog is trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with a disability? If yes, further inquiries are inappropriate because the animal is a service animal. If not, it is advisable that the PHA limit its inquiries to the following two questions: (1) Is the animal required because of the disability? and (2) What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

If the answer to question (1) is “yes” and work or a task is identified in response to question (2), grant the requested accommodation if otherwise reasonable. If the answer to either question is “no,” the animal does not qualify as a service animal but may be a support animal.

A service animal must be permitted in all areas of the facility where members of the public are allowed.

### **Support Animals (Assistance Animals other than Service Animals)**

If the animal does not qualify as a service animal, the PHA must next determine whether the animal would qualify as a support animal (other type of assistance animal). If the individual has indeed requested a reasonable accommodation to get or keep an animal in connection with a physical or mental impairment or disability, the PHA may use the following questions to help them assess whether to grant the accommodation in accordance with the policies outlined in Chapter 2 (the PHA is not required to grant a reasonable accommodation that has not been requested):

- Does the person have an observable disability or does the PHA already have information giving them reason to believe that the person has a disability? If not, has the person requesting the accommodation provided information that reasonably supports that the person seeking the accommodation has a disability?

- If the person has an observable disability, the PHA already has information giving them reason to believe the person has a disability, or the person has provided information supporting that he or she has a disability, then has the person provided information that reasonably supports that the animal does work, performs tasks, provides assistance, and/or provides therapeutic emotional support with respect to the individual's disability?
- If yes, is the animal commonly kept in households? An *animal commonly kept in households* would be a dog, cat, small bird, rabbit, hamster, gerbil, other rodent, fish, turtle, or other small, domesticated animal that is traditionally kept in the home for pleasure rather than for commercial purposes. For purposes of this assessment, reptiles (other than turtles), barnyard animals, monkeys, kangaroos, and other non-domesticated animals are not considered common household animals.

If the individual is requesting to keep a unique animal not commonly kept in households, then the requestor has the substantial burden of demonstrating a disability-related therapeutic need for the specific animal or the specific type of animal. Such individuals are encouraged to submit documentation from a health care professional.

### **General Considerations**

A person with a disability is not automatically entitled to have an assistance animal. Reasonable accommodation requires that there is a relationship between the person's disability and his or her need for the animal [PH Occ GB, p. 179].

Before denying a reasonable accommodation request due to lack of information confirming an individual's disability or disability-related need for an animal, the PHA is encouraged to engage in a good-faith dialog with the requestor called the "interactive process" [FHEO 2020-01].

A PHA may not refuse to allow a person with a disability to have an assistance animal merely because the animal does not have formal training. Some, but not all, animals that assist persons with disabilities are professionally trained. Other assistance animals are trained by the owners themselves and, in some cases, no special training is required. The question is whether or not the animal performs the assistance or provides the benefit needed by the person with the disability [PH Occ GB, p. 178].

A PHA's refusal to permit persons with a disability to use and live with an assistance animal that is needed to assist them, would violate Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Fair Housing Act unless [PH Occ GB, p. 179]:

- There is reliable objective evidence that the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by a reasonable accommodation
- There is reliable objective evidence that the animal would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others

The Fair Housing Act does not require a dwelling to be made available to an individual whose tenancy would constitute a direct threat to the health or safety of other individuals or would result in substantial physical damage to the property of others. A PHA may therefore refuse a reasonable accommodation for an assistance animal if the specific animal poses a direct threat that cannot be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level through the actions the individual takes to maintain or control the animal (e.g., keeping the animal in a security enclosure).

While most requests for reasonable accommodations involve one animal, requests sometimes involve more than one animal (for example, a person has a disability-related need for both

animals, or two people living together each have a disability-related need for a separate assistance animal). The decision-making process in Notice FHEO 2020-01 should be used in accordance with the reasonable accommodation policies in Chapter 2 for all requests for exceptions or modifications to the PHA's rules, policies, practices, and procedures so that persons with disabilities can have assistance animals in the housing where they reside.

PHAs have the authority to regulate service animals and assistance animals under applicable federal, state, and local law [24 CFR 5.303(b)(3); 960.705(b)(3)].

#### PHA Policy

For an animal to be excluded from the pet policy and be considered a service animal, it must be a trained dog, and there must be a person with disabilities in the household who requires the dog's services.

For an animal to be excluded from the pet policy and be considered a support animal, there must be a person with disabilities in the household, there must be a disability-related need for the animal, and the family must request and the PHA approve a reasonable accommodation in accordance with the criteria outlined in Notice FHEO 2020-01 and the policies contained in Chapter 2.

## **10-I.C. CARE AND HANDLING**

HUD regulations do not affect any authority a PHA may have to regulate assistance animals, including service animals, under federal, state, and local law [24 CFR 5.303; 24 CFR 960.705].

### PHA Policy

Residents are responsible for feeding, maintaining, providing veterinary care, and controlling their assistance animals. A resident may do this on his or her own or with the assistance of family, friends, volunteers, or service providers.

Residents must care for assistance animals in a manner that complies with state and local laws, including anti-cruelty laws.

Residents must ensure that assistance animals do not pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others, or cause substantial physical damage to the development, dwelling unit, or property of other residents.

When a resident's care or handling of an assistance animal violates these policies, the PHA will consider whether the violation could be reduced or eliminated by a reasonable accommodation. If the PHA determines that no such accommodation can be made, the PHA may withdraw the approval of a particular service or assistance animal.

CATS must be: front declawed, spayed or neutered, must be current on all vaccinations, must be trained to use a litter box or other waste receptacle. Cats must be licensed as required by State law or local ordinance. DOGS must be: Spayed or neutered, current on all vaccinations. Dogs must be licensed as required by State law or local ordinance.

A picture of the assistance animal must be provided with registration to the PHA. Registration must be reviewed annually and will be coordinated with the annual re-examination.

Registration will include the name, address and phone number of a person who will be responsible for the assistance animal in case of the tenant's absence.



## **PART II: PET POLICIES FOR ALL DEVELOPMENTS**

[24 CFR 5, Subpart C; 24 CFR 960, Subpart G]

### **10-II.A. OVERVIEW**

The purpose of a pet policy is to establish clear guidelines for ownership of pets and to ensure that no applicant or resident is discriminated against regarding admission or continued occupancy because of ownership of pets. It also establishes reasonable rules governing the keeping of common household pets. This part contains pet policies that apply to all developments.

### **10-II.B. MANAGEMENT APPROVAL OF PETS**

#### **Registration of Pets**

PHAs may require registration of the pet with the PHA [24 CFR 960.707(b)(5)].

##### PHA Policy

Pets must be registered with the PHA before they are brought onto the premises.

Registration includes documentation signed by a licensed veterinarian or state/local authority that the pet has received all inoculations required by state or local law, and that the pet has no communicable disease(s) and is pest-free. This registration must be renewed annually and will be coordinated with the annual reexamination date.

Pets will not be approved to reside in a unit until completion of the registration requirements.

A picture of the pet must be provided upon registration of the pet with the PHA.

The name, address and phone number of a person who will be responsible for the pet in case of the owner's absence.

The tenant must execute a pet agreement with the PHA stating that the tenant acknowledges complete responsibility for the care and cleaning of the pet.

No animal or pet may be kept in violation of humane or health laws.

Information to identify the pet and to demonstrate that it is of reasonable size and demeanor will be required.

A \$75 pet fee and a \$225 pet deposit are required, unless otherwise noted, and these amounts must be paid before the pet is brought onto the premises.

## **Refusal to Register Pets**

### PHA Policy

The PHA will refuse to register a pet if:

The pet is not *a common household pet* as defined in Section 10-II.C. below

Keeping the pet would violate any pet restrictions listed in this policy

The pet owner fails to provide complete pet registration information, or fails to update the registration annually

The applicant has previously been charged with animal cruelty under state or local law; or has been evicted, had to relinquish a pet or been prohibited from future pet ownership due to pet rule violations or a court order

The PHA reasonably determines that the pet owner is unable to keep the pet in compliance with the pet rules and other lease obligations. The pet's temperament and behavior may be considered as a factor in determining the pet owner's ability to comply with provisions of the lease.

If the PHA refuses to register a pet, a written notification will be sent to the pet owner within 10 business days of the PHA's decision. The notice will state the reason for refusing to register the pet and will inform the family of their right to appeal the decision in accordance with the PHA's grievance procedures.

## **Pet Agreement**

### PHA Policy

Residents who have been approved to have a pet must enter into a pet agreement with the PHA, or the approval of the pet will be withdrawn.

The pet agreement is the resident's certification that he or she has received a copy of the PHA's pet policy and applicable house rules, that he or she has read the policies and/or rules, understands them, and agrees to comply with them.

The resident further certifies by signing the pet agreement that he or she understands that noncompliance with the PHA's pet policy and applicable house rules may result in the withdrawal of PHA approval of the pet or termination of tenancy.

If a Townhome Association has stricter policies regarding pets, the household--- must comply with the stricter policies.



## **10-II.C. STANDARDS FOR PETS [24 CFR 5.318; 960.707(b)]**

PHAs may establish reasonable requirements related to pet ownership including, but not limited to:

- Limitations on the number of animals in a unit, based on unit size
- Prohibitions on types of animals that the PHA classifies as dangerous, provided that such classifications are consistent with applicable state and local law
- Prohibitions on individual animals, based on certain factors, including the size and weight of the animal
- Requiring pet owners to have their pets spayed or neutered

PHAs may not require pet owners to:

- Have any pet's vocal cord's removed.
- To obtain or carry liability insurance.
- Have cats declawed.

### **Definition of "Common Household Pet"**

There is no regulatory definition of common household pet for public housing programs, although the regulations for pet ownership in both elderly/disabled and general occupancy developments use the term. The regulations for pet ownership in elderly/disabled developments expressly authorize PHAs to define the term [24 CFR 5.306(2)].

PHA Policy:

### **Types of Pets Allowed**

No types of pets other than the following may be kept by a resident.

1. Dogs

Maximum number: 1

Maximum adult weight: 25 pounds

Must be housebroken

Must be spayed or neutered

Must have all required inoculations

Must be licensed as specified now or in the future by State law and local ordinance

The \$75 nonrefundable pet fee and \$225.00 deposit are required.

OR

2. Cats

Maximum number: 1

Must be spayed or neutered

Must have all required inoculations

Must be trained to use a litter box or other waste receptacle

Must be licensed as specified now or in the future by State law or local ordinance

The \$75 nonrefundable pet fee and \$225 deposit are required.

OR

3. Birds

Maximum number: 2

The bird must remain in a cage at all times.

If the bird(s) cause damage to the unit, the family will be billed for the repairs.

No pet deposit is required.

OR

4. Fish

Maximum aquarium size: 20 gallons

Must be maintained on an approved stand

If the fish tank cause damage to the unit, the family will be billed for the repairs.

No pet deposit is required.

OR

5. Rodents (rabbit, guinea pig, hamster, or gerbil ONLY)

Maximum number: 2

Must be enclosed in an acceptable cage at all times

Must have any or all inoculations as specified now or in the future by State law or local ordinance.

If the rodent(s) cause damage to the unit, the family will be billed for the repairs.

No pet deposit is required, except for a rabbit. The \$75 nonrefundable pet fee and \$225 deposit are required for a rabbit.

OR

6. Turtles

Maximum number: 2

Must be enclosed in an acceptable cage or container at all times.

No pet deposit is required for a turtle.

No other pets will be allowed.

The family cannot have both a cat and a dog. Only one or the other.

### PHA Policy

*Common household pet* means a domesticated animal, such as a dog, cat, bird, or fish that is traditionally recognized as a companion animal and is kept in the home for pleasure rather than commercial purposes.

The following animals are not considered common household pets:

- Reptiles

- Rodents not listed above.

- Insects

- Arachnids

- Wild animals or feral animals

- Pot-bellied pigs

- Animals used for commercial breeding

## **Pet Restrictions**

### PHA Policy

The following animals are not permitted:

Any animal whose adult weight will exceed 25 pounds

Dogs of the pit bull, rottweiler, chow, or boxer breeds

Ferrets or other animals whose natural protective mechanisms pose a risk to small children of serious bites or lacerations

Any animal not permitted under state or local law or code

## **Number of Pets**

### PHA Policy

Residents may own a maximum of three pets total. A fish tank is considered one pet. Examples would be: one cat, one bird, one turtle, or one dog and two birds, or two gerbils and a fish tank.

In the case of fish, residents may keep no more than can be maintained in a safe and healthy manner in a tank holding up to 20 gallons. Such a tank or aquarium will be counted as 1 pet.

## **Other Requirements**

### PHA Policy

Dogs and cats must be spayed or neutered at the time of registration or, in the case of underage animals, within 30 days of the pet reaching 6 months of age. Pets must be licensed in accordance with state or local law. Residents must provide proof of licensing at the time of registration and annually, in conjunction with the resident's annual reexamination.

## **10-II.D. PET RULES**

Pet owners must maintain pets responsibly, in accordance with PHA policies, and in compliance with applicable state and local public health, animal control, and animal cruelty laws and regulations [24 CFR 5.315; 24 CFR 960.707(a)].

### **Pet Area Restrictions**

#### PHA Policy

Pets must be maintained within the resident's unit. When outside of the unit (within the building or on the grounds) dogs and cats must be kept on a leash or carried. They must be under the control of the resident or other responsible individual at all times.

Pets other than dogs or cats must be kept in a cage or carrier when outside of the unit.

Pets are not permitted in common areas including lobbies, community rooms and laundry areas except for those common areas which are entrances to and exits from the building.

Pet owners are not permitted to exercise pets or permit pets to deposit waste on project premises outside of the areas designated for such purposes. Pet owners are required to clean up after their pet.

### **Designated Pet/No-Pet Areas [24 CFR 5.318(g), PH Occ GB, p. 182]**

PHAs may designate buildings, floors of buildings, or sections of buildings as no-pet areas where pets generally may not be permitted. Pet rules may also designate buildings, floors of building, or sections of building for residency by pet-owning tenants.

PHAs may direct initial tenant moves as may be necessary to establish pet and no-pet areas. The PHA may not refuse to admit, or delay admission of, an applicant on the grounds that the applicant's admission would violate a pet or no-pet area. The PHA may adjust the pet and no-pet areas or may direct such additional moves as may be necessary to accommodate such applicants for tenancy or to meet the changing needs of the existing tenants.

PHAs may not designate an entire development as a no-pet area, since regulations permit residents to own pets.

#### PHA Policy

With the exception of common areas as described in the previous policy, the PHA has not designated any buildings, floors of buildings, or sections of buildings as no-pet areas. In addition, the PHA has not designated any buildings, floors of buildings, or sections of buildings for residency of pet-owning tenants.

## **Cleanliness**

### PHA Policy

The pet owner shall be responsible for the removal of waste.

The pet owner shall take adequate precautions to eliminate any pet odors within or around the unit and to maintain the unit in a sanitary condition at all times.

Litter box requirements:

Pet owners must promptly dispose of waste from litter boxes and must maintain litter boxes in a sanitary manner.

Litter shall not be disposed of by being flushed through a toilet.

Litter boxes shall be kept inside the resident's dwelling unit.

## **Alterations to Unit**

### PHA Policy

Pet owners shall not alter their unit, patio, premises or common areas to create an enclosure for any animal.

Installation of pet doors is prohibited.

## **Noise**

### PHA Policy

Pet owners must agree to control the noise of pets so that such noise does not constitute a nuisance to other residents or interrupt their peaceful enjoyment of their housing unit or premises. This includes, but is not limited to loud or continuous barking, howling, whining, biting, scratching, chirping, or other such activities.

## **Pet Care**

### PHA Policy

Each pet owner shall be responsible for adequate care, nutrition, exercise and medical attention for his/her pet.

Each pet owner shall be responsible for appropriately training and caring for his/her pet to ensure that the pet is not a nuisance or danger to other residents and does not damage PHA property.

No animals may be tethered or chained inside or outside the dwelling unit at any time.

## **Responsible Parties**

### PHA Policy

The pet owner will be required to designate two responsible parties for the care of the pet if the health or safety of the pet is threatened by the death or incapacity of the pet owner, or by other factors that render the pet owner unable to care for the pet.

A resident who is caring for another resident's pet temporarily must notify the PHA in writing prior to caring for the pet and sign a statement that they agree to abide by all of the pet rules.

## **Pets Temporarily on the Premises**

### PHA Policy

Pets that are not owned by a tenant are not allowed on the premises. Residents are prohibited from feeding or harboring stray animals. Visiting pets are not allowed.

This rule does not apply to visiting pet programs sponsored by a humane society or other non-profit organizations, and approved by the PHA.

## **Pet Rule Violations**

### PHA Policy

All complaints of cruelty and all dog bites will be referred to animal control or an applicable agency for investigation and enforcement.

If a determination is made on objective facts supported by written statements, that a resident/pet owner has violated the pet rules, written notice will be served.

The notice will contain a brief statement of the factual basis for the determination and the pet rule(s) that were violated. The notice will also state:

That the pet owner has 10 business days from the effective date of the service of notice to correct the violation or make written request for a meeting to discuss the violation

That the pet owner is entitled to be accompanied by another person of his or her choice at the meeting

That the pet owner's failure to correct the violation, request a meeting, or appear at a requested meeting may result in initiation of procedures to remove the pet, or to terminate the pet owner's tenancy



## **Notice for Pet Removal**

### PHA Policy

If the pet owner and the PHA are unable to resolve the violation at the meeting or the pet owner fails to correct the violation in the time period allotted by the PHA, the PHA may serve notice to remove the pet.

The notice will contain:

- A brief statement of the factual basis for the PHA's determination of the pet rule that has been violated

- The requirement that the resident /pet owner must remove the pet within 10 calendar days of the notice

- A statement that failure to remove the pet may result in the initiation of termination of tenancy procedures

## **Pet Removal**

### PHA Policy

If the death or incapacity of the pet owner threatens the health or safety of the pet, or other factors occur that render the owner unable to care for the pet or if the owner has abandoned the pet in the unit, the situation will be reported to the responsible party designated by the pet owner.

If the responsible party is unwilling or unable to care for the pet, or if the PHA after reasonable efforts cannot contact the responsible party, the PHA may contact the appropriate state or local agency and request the removal of the pet.

## **Termination of Tenancy**

### PHA Policy

The PHA may initiate procedures for termination of tenancy based on a pet rule violation if:

- The pet owner has failed to remove the pet or correct a pet rule violation within the time period specified

- The pet rule violation is sufficient to begin procedures to terminate tenancy under terms of the lease

## **Emergencies**

### PHA Policy

The PHA will take all necessary steps to ensure that pets that become vicious, display symptoms of severe illness, or demonstrate behavior that constitutes an immediate threat to the health or safety of others, are immediately removed from the premises by referring the situation to the appropriate state or local entity authorized to remove such animals.

If it is necessary for the PHA to place the pet in a shelter facility, the cost will be the responsibility of the pet owner.

If the pet is removed as a result of any aggressive act on the part of the pet, the pet will not be allowed back on the premises.



## **PART III: PET DEPOSITS AND FEES IN ELDERLY/DISABLED DEVELOPMENTS**

### **10-III.A. OVERVIEW**

This part describes the PHA's policies for pet deposits and fees in elderly, disabled and mixed population developments. Policies governing deposits and fees in general occupancy developments are described in Part IV.

### **10-III.B. PET DEPOSITS**

#### **Payment of Deposit**

The PHA may require tenants who own or keep pets in their units to pay a refundable pet deposit. This deposit is in addition to any other financial obligation generally imposed on tenants of the project [24 CFR 5.318(d)(1)].

The maximum amount of pet deposit that may be charged by a PHA on a per dwelling unit basis, is the higher of the total tenant payment (TTP) or such reasonable fixed amount as the PHA may require. The PHA may permit gradual accumulation of the pet deposit by the pet owner [24 CFR 5.318(d)(3)].

The pet deposit is not part of the rent payable by the resident [24 CFR 5.318(d)(5)].

#### PHA Policy

Pet owners are required to pay a pet deposit in addition to any other required deposits.

The amount of the deposit is \$225 with an additional \$75 nonrefundable pet fee and these amounts must be paid in full before the pet is brought on the premises.

#### **Refund of Deposit [24 CFR 5.318(d)(1)]**

The PHA may use the pet deposit only to pay reasonable expenses directly attributable to the presence of the pet, including (but not limited to) the costs of repairs and replacements to, and fumigation of, the tenant's dwelling unit. The PHA must refund the unused portion of the pet deposit to the tenant within a reasonable time after the tenant moves from the project or no longer owns or keeps a pet in the unit.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will refund the pet deposit to the resident, less the costs of any damages caused by the pet to the dwelling unit, within 30 days of move-out or removal of the pet from the unit.

The resident will be billed for any amount that exceeds the pet deposit.

The PHA will provide the resident with a written list of any charges against the pet deposit within 10 business days of the move-out inspection. If the resident disagrees with the amount charged to the pet deposit, the PHA will provide a meeting to discuss the charges.

The \$75.00 of pet fee is non-refundable.

## **10-III.C. OTHER CHARGES**

### **Pet-Related Damages During Occupancy**

#### PHA Policy

All reasonable expenses incurred by the PHA as a result of damages directly attributable to the presence of the pet in the project will be the responsibility of the resident, including:

- The cost of repairs and replacements to the resident's dwelling unit

- Fumigation of the dwelling unit

- Repairs to common areas of the project

The expense of flea elimination shall also be the responsibility of the resident.

If the resident is in occupancy when such costs occur, the resident shall be billed for such costs in accordance with the policies in Section 8-I.G, Maintenance and Damage Charges. Pet deposits will not be applied to the costs of pet-related damages during occupancy.

Charges for pet-related damage are not part of rent payable by the resident.

### **Pet Waste Removal Charge**

The regulations do not address the PHA's ability to impose charges for house pet rule violations. However, charges for violation of PHA pet rules may be treated like charges for other violations of the lease and PHA tenancy rules.

#### PHA Policy

A separate pet waste removal charge of \$25.00 per occurrence will be assessed against pet owners who fail to remove pet waste in accordance with this policy.

Notices of pet waste removal charges will be in accordance with requirements regarding notices of adverse action. Charges are due and payable 14 calendar days after billing. If the family requests a grievance hearing within the required timeframe, the PHA may not take action for nonpayment of the charge until the conclusion of the grievance process.

Charges for pet waste removal are not part of rent payable by the resident.

If the PHA must hire a pet waste removal company to clean the premises, the pet owner will be assessed the company's fee.

## **PART IV: PET DEPOSITS AND FEES IN GENERAL OCCUPANCY DEVELOPMENTS**

### **10-IV.A. OVERVIEW**

This part describes the PHA's policies for pet deposits and fees for those who reside in general occupancy developments.

### **10-IV.B. PET DEPOSITS**

A PHA may require a refundable pet deposit to cover additional costs attributable to the pet and not otherwise covered [24 CFR 960.707(b)(1)].

A PHA that requires a resident to pay a pet deposit must place the deposit in an account of the type required under applicable State or local law for pet deposits, or if there are no such requirements, for rental security deposits, if applicable. The PHA must comply with such laws as to retention of the deposit, interest, and return of the deposit to the resident, and any other applicable requirements [24 CFR 960.707(d)].

#### **Payment of Deposit**

##### PHA Policy

Pet owners are required to pay a pet deposit of \$225 with an additional \$75 nonrefundable pet fee. These amounts must be paid in full before the pet is brought on the premises.

The pet deposit is not part of rent payable by the resident.

#### **Refund of Deposit**

##### PHA Policy

The PHA will refund the pet deposit to the resident, less the costs of any damages caused by the pet to the dwelling unit, within 21 days of move-out or removal of the pet from the unit.

The resident will be billed for any amount that exceeds the pet deposit.

The PHA will provide the resident with a written list of any charges against the pet deposit within 10 business days of the move-out inspection. If the resident disagrees with the amount charged to the pet deposit, the PHA will provide a meeting to discuss the charges.

The \$75.00 pet fee is non-refundable.

#### **10-IV.C. NON-REFUNDABLE NOMINAL PET SURCHARGE**

PHAs may require payment of a non-refundable nominal pet fee to cover the reasonable operating costs to the development relating to the presence of pets [24 CFR 960.707(b)(1)].

##### PHA Policy

The PHA does not require pet owners to pay a non-refundable nominal monthly pet surcharge.

## **10-IV.D. OTHER CHARGES**

### **Pet-Related Damages During Occupancy**

#### PHA Policy

All reasonable expenses incurred by the PHA as a result of damages directly attributable to the presence of the pet in the project will be the responsibility of the resident, including:

- The cost of repairs and replacements to the resident's dwelling unit

- Fumigation of the dwelling unit

- Repairs to common areas of the project

The expense of flea elimination shall also be the responsibility of the resident.

If the resident is in occupancy when such costs occur, the resident shall be billed for such costs in accordance with the policies in Section 8-I.G, Maintenance and Damage Charges. Pet deposits will not be applied to the costs of pet-related damages during occupancy.

Charges for pet-related damage are not part of rent payable by the resident.

### **Pet Waste Removal Charge**

The regulations do not address the PHA's ability to impose charges for house pet rule violations. However, charges for violation of PHA pet rules may be treated like charges for other violations of the lease and PHA tenancy rules.

#### PHA Policy

A separate pet waste removal charge of \$25.00 per occurrence will be assessed against pet owners who fail to remove pet waste in accordance with this policy. If the PHA hires a pet waste removal company to clean the premises, the pet owner will be assessed the company fee.

Such charges will be due and payable 14 calendar days after billing.

Charges for pet waste removal are not part of rent payable by the resident.





## **Chapter 11**

### **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explains HUD regulations requiring PHAs to implement a community service program for all nonexempt adults living in public housing.

This chapter describes HUD regulations and PHA policies related to these topics in two parts:

Part I: Community Service Requirements. This part describes who is subject to the community service requirement, who is exempt, and HUD's definition of economic self-sufficiency.

Part II: PHA Implementation of Community Service. This part provides PHA policy regarding PHA implementation and program design.

#### **PART I: COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENT**

##### **11-I.A. OVERVIEW**

HUD regulations pertaining to the community service requirement are contained in 24 CFR 960 Subpart F (960.600 through 960.609). PHAs and residents must comply with the community service requirement, effective with PHA fiscal years that commenced on or after October 1, 2000. Per 903.7(l)(1)(iii), the PHA Plan must contain a statement of how the PHA will comply with the community service requirement, including any cooperative agreement that the PHA has entered into or plans to enter into.

Community service is the performance of voluntary work or duties that are a public benefit, and that serve to improve the quality of life, enhance resident self-sufficiency, or increase resident self-responsibility in the community. Community service is not employment and may not include political activities [24 CFR 960.601(b)].

In administering community service requirements, the PHA must comply with all nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements [24 CFR 960.605(c)(5)].

## 11-I.B. REQUIREMENTS

Each adult resident of the PHA, who is not exempt, must [24 CFR 960.603(a)]:

- Contribute 8 hours per month of community service; or
- Participate in an economic self-sufficiency program (as defined in the regulations) for 8 hours per month; or
- Perform 8 hours per month of combined activities (community service and economic self-sufficiency programs).
- The required community service or self-sufficiency activity may be completed 8 hours each month or may be aggregated across a year. Any blocking of hours is acceptable as long as 96 hours is completed by each annual certification of compliance [Notice PIH 2015-12].

### Definitions

#### ***Exempt Individual [24 CFR 960.601(b), Notice PIH 2015-12]***

An *exempt individual* is an adult who:

- Is age 62 years or older
- Is blind or disabled (as defined under section 216[i][1] or 1614 of the Social Security Act), and who certifies that because of this disability s/he is unable to comply with the service provisions
- Is a primary caretaker of such an individual
- Is engaged in work activities

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will consider 30 hours per week as the minimum number of hours needed to qualify for a work activity exemption.

- Is able to meet requirements of being exempted under a state program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, or under any other welfare program of the state in which the PHA is located, including a state-administered welfare-to-work program
  - This exemption applies to anyone whose characteristics or family situation meet the welfare agency exemption criteria and can be verified.

- Is a member of a family receiving assistance, benefits, or services under a state program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, or under any other welfare program of the state in which the PHA is located, including a state-administered welfare-to-work program and the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP),, and has not been found by the state or other administering entity to be in noncompliance with such program.

***Community Service [24 CFR 960.601(b), Notice PIH 2015-12]***

*Community service* is the performance of voluntary work or duties that are a public benefit, and that serve to improve the quality of life, enhance resident self-sufficiency, or increase resident self responsibility in the community. Community service is not employment and may not include political activities.

Eligible community service activities include, but are not limited to, work at:

- Local public or nonprofit institutions such as schools, head start programs, before or after school programs, child care centers, hospitals, clinics, hospices, nursing homes, recreation centers, senior centers, adult day care programs, homeless shelters, feeding programs, food banks (distributing either donated or commodity foods), or clothes closets (distributing donated clothing)
- Nonprofit organizations serving PHA residents or their children such as: Boy or Girl Scouts, Boys or Girls Club, 4-H clubs, Police Assistance League (PAL), organized children's recreation, mentoring or education programs, Big Brothers or Big Sisters, garden centers, community clean-up programs, beautification programs
- Programs funded under the Older Americans Act, such as Green Thumb, Service Corps of Retired Executives, senior meals programs, senior centers, Meals on Wheels
- Public or nonprofit organizations dedicated to seniors, youth, children, residents, citizens, special-needs populations or with missions to enhance the environment, historic resources, cultural identities, neighborhoods, or performing arts
- PHA housing to improve grounds or provide gardens (so long as such work does not alter the PHA's insurance coverage); or work through resident organizations to help other residents with problems, including serving on the Resident Advisory Board
- Care for the children of other residents so parent may volunteer

PHAs may form their own policy in regards to accepting community services at profit-motivated entities, acceptance of volunteer work performed at homes or offices of general private citizens, and court-ordered or probation-based work.

**PHA Policy**

Community services at profit-motivated entities, volunteer work performed at homes or offices of general private citizens, and court-ordered or probation-based work will not be considered eligible community service activities.

***Economic Self-Sufficiency Program [24 CFR 5.603(b), Notice PIH 2015-12]***

For purposes of satisfying the community service requirement, an *economic self-sufficiency program* is defined by HUD as any program designed to encourage, assist, train, or facilitate economic independence of assisted families or to provide work for such families.

Eligible self-sufficiency activities include, but are not limited to:

- Job readiness or job training
- Training programs through local one-stop career centers, workforce investment boards (local entities administered through the U.S. Department of Labor), or other training providers
- Employment counseling, work placement, or basic skills training
- Education, including higher education (junior college or college), GED classes, or reading, financial, or computer literacy classes
- Apprenticeships (formal or informal)
- English proficiency or English as a second language classes
- Budgeting and credit counseling
- Any other program necessary to ready a participant to work (such as substance abuse counseling or mental health counseling)

***Work Activities [42 U.S.C. 607(d)]***

As it relates to an exemption from the community service requirement, *work activities* means:

- Unsubsidized employment
- Subsidized private sector employment
- Subsidized public sector employment
- Work experience (including work associated with the refurbishing of publicly assisted housing) if sufficient private sector employment is not available
- On-the-job training
- Job search and job readiness assistance
- Community service programs
- Vocational educational training (not to exceed 12 months with respect to any individual)
- Job skills training directly related to employment
- Education directly related to employment, in the case of a recipient who has not received a high school diploma or a certificate of high school equivalency
- Satisfactory attendance at secondary school or in a course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalence, in the case of a recipient who has not completed secondary school or received such a certificate

## **Notification Requirements [24 CFR 960.605(c)(2), Notice PIH 2015-12, Notice PIH 2016-06]**

The PHA must give each family a written description of the community service requirement, the process for claiming status as an exempt person, and the process for PHA verification of exempt status. The PHA must also notify the family of its determination identifying the family members who are subject to the service requirement, and the family members who are exempt. In addition, the family must sign a certification, such as Attachment A of Notice PIH 2015-12, that they have received and read the policy and understand that if they are not exempt, failure to comply with the requirement will result in nonrenewal of their lease. The family must also sign a certification at annual examination, such as Attachment B of Notice PIH 2015-12, certifying that they understand the requirement.

### PHA Policy

The PHA will provide the family with a copy of the Community Service Policy found in Exhibit 11-1 of this chapter, at lease-up, lease renewal, when a family member is determined to be subject to the community service requirement during the lease term, and at any time upon the family's request. The policy will notify the family that self-certification forms are subject to review by the PHA.

On an annual basis, at the time of lease renewal, the PHA will notify the family in writing of the family members who are subject to the community service requirement and the family members who are exempt. If the family includes nonexempt individuals the notice will include a list of agencies in the community that provide volunteer and/or training opportunities, as well as a documentation form on which they may record the activities they perform and the number of hours contributed. The form will also have a place for a signature by an appropriate official, who will certify to the activities and hours completed.

### **11-I.C. DETERMINATION OF EXEMPTION STATUS AND COMPLIANCE [24 CFR 960.605(c)(3)]**

The PHA must review and verify family compliance with service requirements annually at least thirty days before the end of the twelve month lease term. The policy for documentation and verification of compliance with service requirements may be found at Section 11-I.D., Documentation and Verification.

#### **PHA Policy**

Where the lease term does not coincide with the effective date of the annual reexamination, the PHA will change the effective date of the annual reexamination to coincide with the lease term. In making this change, the PHA will ensure that the annual reexamination is conducted within 12 months of the last annual reexamination.

### **Annual Determination**

#### ***Determination of Exemption Status***

An exempt individual is excused from the community service requirement [24 CFR 960.603(a)].

#### **PHA Policy**

At least 60 days prior to lease renewal, the PHA will review and verify the exemption status of all adult family members. This verification will only be done on an annual basis unless the family reports a change or the PHA has reason to believe that an individual's exemption status has changed. For individuals who are exempt because they are 62 years of age and older at move in, verification of exemption status will be done only at the initial examination.

Upon completion of the verification process, the PHA will notify the family of its determination in accordance with the policy in Section 11-I.B., Notification Requirements.



## ***Determination of Compliance***

The PHA must review resident family compliance with service requirements annually at least 30 days before the end of the twelve month lease term [24 CFR 960.605(c)(3)]. As part of this review, the PHA must verify that any family member that is not exempt from the community service requirement has met his or her service obligation.

### **PHA Policy**

In the recertification packet the PHA will provide written notice requiring the family to submit documentation that all subject family members have complied with the service requirement. The family will provide this written documentation at the recertification appointment.

If the family fails to submit the required documentation within the required timeframe, or PHA approved extension, the subject family members will be considered noncompliant with community service requirements, and notices of noncompliance will be issued pursuant to the policies in Section 11-I.E., Noncompliance.

## **Change in Status between Annual Determinations**

### **PHA Policy**

#### **Exempt to Nonexempt Status**

If an exempt individual becomes nonexempt during the twelve month lease term, it is the family's responsibility to report this change to the PHA within 5 days.

Within 10 days of a family reporting such a change, or the PHA determining such a change is necessary, the PHA will provide written notice of the effective date of the requirement, a list of agencies in the community that provide volunteer and/or training opportunities, as well as a documentation form on which the family member may record the activities performed and number of hours contributed.

The effective date of the community service requirement will be the first of the month following 30 day notice.

#### **Determination of Initial compliance**

When an adult family member becomes subject to community service, he or she must perform 8 hours of community service for the months he or she is subject to the requirement before the end of the lease term (anniversary date).

#### **Example 1:**

Alberto Jones turns 18 on 5/10/15 and is not exempt from the community service requirement. His community service requirement begins on 6/1/15 and his initial compliance is reviewed before the end of the lease term (anniversary date, which is 11/30/15).

Alberto must perform 6 months of community service in his initial compliance period, before the end of the lease term (anniversary date).

#### **Example 2:**

Lisa Dewhurst leaves her job on 9/20/14 and is not exempt from the

community service requirement. Her community service requirement begins on 10/1/14 and her initial compliance is reviewed before the end of the lease term (anniversary date), which is 6/30/15.

Ms. Dewhurst must perform 9 months of community service in her initial compliance period, before the end of the lease term (anniversary date).

#### Nonexempt to Exempt Status

If a nonexempt person becomes exempt during the twelve month lease term, it is the family's responsibility to report this change to the PHA within 5 days. Any claim of exemption will be verified by the PHA in accordance with the policy at 11-I.D., Documentation and Verification of Exemption Status.

Within 10 business days of a family reporting such a change, or the PHA determining such a change is necessary, the PHA will provide the family written notice that the family member is no longer subject to the community service requirement, if the PHA is able to verify the exemption.

The exemption will be effective upon verification of individual circumstances.

## **11-I.D. DOCUMENTATION AND VERIFICATION [24 CFR 960.605(c)(4) 960.607, Notice PIH 2016-08]**

The PHA must retain reasonable documentation of service requirement performance or exemption in participant files.

### **Documentation and Verification of Exemption Status**

#### PHA Policy

All family members who claim they are exempt from the community service requirement will be required to sign the community service exemption certification form found in Exhibit 11-3. The PHA will provide a completed copy to the family and will keep a copy in the tenant file.

The PHA will verify that an individual is exempt from the community service requirement by following the verification hierarchy and documentation requirements in Chapter 7.

The PHA makes the final determination whether or not to grant an exemption from the community service requirement. If a resident does not agree with the PHA's determination, s/he can dispute the decision through the PHA's grievance procedures (see Chapter 14).

### **Documentation and Verification of Compliance**

At each regularly scheduled reexamination, each nonexempt family member presents a signed standardized certification form developed by the PHA of community service and self-sufficiency activities performed over the last 12 months [Notice PIH 2015-12].

If qualifying community service activities are administered by an organization other than the PHA, a family member who is required to fulfill a service requirement must provide documentation required by the PHA. The PHA may require self-certification or certification from a third party [24 CFR 960.607].

If the PHA accepts self-certification of compliance with the community service requirement, it must provide a form which includes a statement that the client performed the required hours, contact information for the community service provider, a description of activities performed, and dates of service.

If the PHA accepts self-certification, it must validate a sample of certifications through third-party documentation. The PHA must notify families that self-certification forms are available and that a sample of self-certifications will be validated.

HUD strongly encourages PHAs to investigate community service compliance when there are questions of accuracy.

#### PHA Policy

Each individual who is subject to the community service requirement will be required to record their community service or self-sufficiency activities and the number of hours contributed on the required form. The certification form will also include places for signatures and phone numbers of supervisors, instructors, and counselors certifying to the number of hours contributed.

Families will be required to submit the documentation to the PHA, upon request by the PHA, at least annually.

If the PHA has reasonable cause to believe that the certification provided by the family is false or fraudulent, the PHA has the right to require additional third-party verification.

## **11-I.E. NONCOMPLIANCE**

### **Noncompliant residents**

The lease specifies that it is renewed automatically for all purposes, unless the family fails to comply with the community service requirement. Violation of the service requirement is grounds for nonrenewal of the lease at the end of the twelve month lease term, but not for termination of tenancy during the course of the twelve month lease term [24 CFR 960.603(b)].

PHAs may not evict a family due to CSSR noncompliance. However, if the PHA finds a tenant is noncompliant with CSSR, the PHA must provide written notification to the tenant of the noncompliance which must include:

- A brief description of the finding of non-compliance with CSSR
- A statement that the PHA will not renew the lease at the end of the current 12 month lease term unless the tenant enters into a written work-out agreement with the PHA or the family provides written assurance that is satisfactory to the PHA explaining that the tenant and other noncompliant resident no longer resides in the unit. Such written work-out agreement must include the means through which a noncompliant family member will comply with the CSSR requirement.

[24 CFR 960.607(c), Notice PIH 2009-48].

The notice must also state that the tenant may request a grievance hearing on the PHA's determination, in accordance with the PHA's grievance procedures, and that the tenant may exercise any available judicial remedy to seek timely redress for the PHA's nonrenewal of the lease because of the PHA's determination.

### PHA Policy

The notice of noncompliance will be sent at least 45 days prior to the end of the lease term.

The family will have 10 business days from the date of the notice of noncompliance to enter into a written work-out agreement to cure the noncompliance over the 12 month term of the new lease, provide documentation that the noncompliant resident no longer resides in the unit, or to request a grievance hearing.

If the family reports that a noncompliant family member is no longer residing in the unit, the family must provide documentation that the family member has actually vacated the unit before the PHA will agree to continued occupancy of the family. Documentation must consist of a certification signed by the head of household as well as evidence of the current address of the family member that previously resided with them.

If the family does not request a grievance hearing, or does not take either corrective action required by the notice of noncompliance within the required 10 business day timeframe, the PHA will terminate tenancy in accordance with the policies in Section 13-IV.D.

### **Continued Noncompliance and Enforcement Documentation [24 CFR 960.607(b)]**

Should a family member refuse to sign a written work-out agreement, or fail to comply with the terms of the work-out agreement, PHAs are required to initiate termination of tenancy proceedings at the end of the current 12-month lease [see 24 CFR 966.53(c)] for failure to comply with lease requirements. When initiating termination of the tenancy proceedings, the PHA will provide the following procedural safeguards:

- Adequate notice to the tenant of the grounds for terminating the tenancy and for non-renewal of the lease
- Right of the tenant to be represented by counsel;
- Opportunity for the tenant to refute the evidence presented by the PHA, including the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses and present any affirmative legal or equitable defense which the tenant may have; and
- A decision on the merits.

### PHA Policy

Notices of continued noncompliance will be sent at least 30 days prior to the end of the lease term and will also serve as the family's termination notice. The notice will meet the requirements for termination notices described in Section 13-IV.D, Form, Delivery, and Content of the Notice.

The family will have 10 business days from the date of the notice of non-compliance to provide documentation that the noncompliant resident no longer resides in the unit, or to request a grievance hearing.

If the family reports that a noncompliant family member is no longer residing in the unit, the family must provide documentation that the family member has actually vacated the unit before the PHA will agree to continued occupancy of the family. Documentation

must consist of a certification signed by the head of household as well as evidence of the current address of the noncompliant family member that previously resided with them.

If the family does not request a grievance hearing, or provide such documentation within the required 10 business day timeframe, the family's lease and tenancy will automatically terminate at the end of the current lease term without further notice.



## **PART II: IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE**

### **11-II.A. OVERVIEW**

Each PHA must develop a policy for administration of the community service and economic self-sufficiency requirements for public housing. It is in the PHA's best interests to develop a viable, effective community service program, to provide residents the opportunity to engage in the community and to develop competencies.

#### **PHA Implementation of Community Service**

The PHA may not substitute any community service or self-sufficiency activities performed by residents for work ordinarily performed by PHA employees, or replace a job at any location where residents perform activities to satisfy the service requirement [24 CFR 960.609].

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## **PHA Program Design**

The PHA may administer qualifying community service or economic self-sufficiency activities directly, or may make community service activities available through a contractor, or through partnerships with qualified organizations, including resident organizations, and community agencies or institutions [24 CFR 960.605(b)].

### PHA Policy

The PHA attempts to provide the broadest choice possible to residents as they choose community service activities.

The PHA may provide information that gives residents opportunities to become involved in the community and to gain competencies and skills. The PHA may work with the resident councils, resident advisory board (RAB) and community organizations to design, implement, assess and recalibrate its community service program.

The PHA may identify volunteer opportunities throughout the community, especially those in proximity to public housing developments. The PHA may provide names and contacts at agencies that can provide opportunities for residents, including persons with disabilities, to fulfill their community service obligations.

Any written agreements or partnerships with contractors and/or qualified organizations, including resident organizations, are described in the PHA Plan.

When the PHA has a ROSS program, a ROSS Service Coordinator, or an FSS program, the PHA will coordinate individual training and service plans (ITSPs) with the community service requirement. Regular meetings with PHA coordinators will satisfy community service activities and PHA coordinators will verify community service hours within individual monthly logs.

## EXHIBIT 11-1: COMMUNITY SERVICE AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY POLICY

### A. Background

The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 requires that all nonexempt (see definitions) public housing adult residents (18 or older) contribute eight (8) hours per month of community service (volunteer work) or participate in eight (8) hours of training, counseling, classes or other activities that help an individual toward self-sufficiency and economic independence. This is a requirement of the public housing lease.

### B. Definitions

**Community Service** – community service activities include, but are not limited to, work at:

- Local public or nonprofit institutions such as schools, head start programs, before or after school programs, child care centers, hospitals, clinics, hospices, nursing homes, recreation centers, senior centers, adult day care programs, homeless shelters, feeding programs, food banks (distributing either donated or commodity foods), or clothes closets (distributing donated clothing)
- Nonprofit organizations serving PHA residents or their children such as: Boy or Girl Scouts, Boys or Girls Club, 4-H clubs, Police Assistance League (PAL), organized children's recreation, mentoring or education programs, Big Brothers or Big Sisters, garden centers, community clean-up programs, beautification programs
- Programs funded under the Older Americans Act, such as Green Thumb, Service Corps of Retired Executives, senior meals programs, senior centers, Meals on Wheels
- Public or nonprofit organizations dedicated to seniors, youth, children, residents, citizens, special-needs populations or with missions to enhance the environment, historic resources, cultural identities, neighborhoods, or performing arts
- PHA housing to improve grounds or provide gardens (so long as such work does not alter the PHA's insurance coverage); or work through resident organizations to help other residents with problems, including serving on the Resident Advisory Board
- Care for the children of other residents so parent may volunteer

**Note:** Political activity is excluded.

**Self-Sufficiency Activities** – self-sufficiency activities include, but are not limited to:

- Job readiness or job training
- Training programs through local one-stop career centers, workforce investment boards (local entities administered through the U.S. Department of Labor), or other training providers
- Employment counseling, work placement, or basic skills training
- Education, including higher education (junior college or college), or reading, financial, or computer literacy classes
- Apprenticeships (formal or informal)
- English proficiency or English as a second language classes
- Budgeting and credit counseling
- Any other program necessary to ready a participant to work (such as substance abuse or mental health counseling)

**Exempt Adult** – an adult member of the family who meets any of the following criteria:

- Is 62 years of age or older
- Is blind or a person with disabilities (as defined under section 216[i][I] or 1614 of the Social Security Act), and who certifies that because of this disability he or she is unable to comply with the service provisions, or is the primary caretaker of such an individual
- Is engaged in *work activities*
- Is able to meet requirements under a state program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, or under any other welfare program of the state in which the PHA is located, including a state-administered welfare-to-work program; or
- Is a member of a family receiving assistance, benefits, or services under a state program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, or under any other welfare program of the state in which the PHA is located, including a state-administered welfare-to-work program, and the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP), and has not been found by the state or other administering entity to be in noncompliance with such program.
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- PHAs can use reasonable guidelines in clarifying the work activities in coordination with TANF, as appropriate.

**Work Activities** – as it relates to an exemption from the community service requirement, *work activities* means:

- Unsubsidized employment
- Subsidized private sector employment
- Subsidized public sector employment
- Work experience (including work associated with the refurbishing of publicly assisted housing) if sufficient private sector employment is not available
- On-the-job training
- Job search and job readiness assistance
- Community service programs
- Vocational educational training (not to exceed 12 months with respect to any individual)
- Job skills training directly related to employment
- Education directly related to employment, in the case of a recipient who has not received a high school diploma or a certificate of high school equivalency
- Satisfactory attendance at secondary school or in a course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalence, in the case of a recipient who has not completed secondary school or received such a certificate
- Provision of child care services to an individual who is participating in a community service program

### **C. Requirements of the Program**

1. The eight (8) hours per month may be either volunteer work or self-sufficiency program activity, or a combination of the two.
2. At least eight (8) hours of activity must be performed each month or may be aggregated across a year. Any blocking of hours is acceptable as long as 96 hours is completed by each annual certification of compliance.
3. Family obligation:
  - At lease execution, all adult members (18 or older) of a public housing resident family must:
    - Sign a certification (Attachment A) that they have received and read this policy and understand that if they are not exempt, failure to comply with the community service requirement will result in a nonrenewal of their lease; and
    - Declare if they are exempt. If exempt, they must complete the Exemption Form (Exhibit 11-3) and provide documentation of the exemption.
  - Upon written notice from the PHA, nonexempt family members must present complete documentation of activities performed during the applicable lease term. This documentation will include places for signatures of supervisors, instructors, or counselors, certifying to the number of hours contributed.
  - If a family member is found to be noncompliant at the end of the 12-month lease term, he or she, and the head of household, will be required to sign an agreement with the housing authority to make up the deficient hours over the next twelve (12) month period, or the lease will be terminated.
  - At annual reexamination, the family must also sign a certification certifying that they understand the community service requirement.
4. Change in exempt status:
  - If, during the twelve (12) month lease period, a nonexempt person becomes exempt, it is his or her responsibility to report this to the PHA and provide documentation of exempt status.
  - If, during the twelve (12) month lease period, an exempt person becomes nonexempt, it is his or her responsibility to report this to the PHA. Upon receipt of this information the PHA will provide the person with the appropriate documentation form(s) and a list of agencies in the community that provide volunteer and/or training opportunities.

#### **D. Authority Obligation**

1. To the greatest extent possible and practicable, the PHA will:
  - Provide names and contacts at agencies that can provide opportunities for residents, including residents with disabilities, to fulfill their community service obligations.
  - Provide in-house opportunities for volunteer work or self-sufficiency activities.
2. The PHA will provide the family with a copy of this policy, and all applicable exemption verification forms and community service documentation forms, at lease-up, lease renewal, when a family member becomes subject to the community service requirement during the lease term, and at any time upon the family's request.
3. Although exempt family members will be required to submit documentation to support their exemption, the PHA will verify the exemption status in accordance with its verification policies. The PHA will make the final determination as to whether or not a family member is exempt from the community service requirement. Residents may use the PHA's grievance procedure if they disagree with the PHA's determination.
4. Noncompliance of family member:
  - At least thirty (30) days prior to the end of the 12-month lease term, the PHA will begin reviewing the exempt or nonexempt status and compliance of family members;
  - If, at the end of the initial 12-month lease term under which a family member is subject to the community service requirement, the PHA finds the family member to be noncompliant, the PHA will not renew the lease unless:
    - The head of household and any other noncompliant resident enter into a written agreement with the PHA, to make up the deficient hours over the next twelve (12) month period; or
    - The family provides written documentation satisfactory to the PHA that the noncompliant family member no longer resides in the unit.
  - If, at the end of the next 12-month lease term, the family member is still not compliant, a 30-day notice to terminate the lease will be issued and the entire family will have to vacate, unless the family provides written documentation satisfactory to the PHA that the noncompliant family member no longer resides in the unit;
  - The family may use the PHA's grievance procedure to dispute the lease termination.

All adult family members must sign and date below, certifying that they have read and received a copy of this Community Service and Self-Sufficiency Policy.

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Resident

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Date

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Resident

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Date

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Resident

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Date

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Resident

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Date

<b>EXHIBIT 11-2: DEFINITION OF A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY UNDER SOCIAL SECURITY ACTS 216(i)(1) and Section 1416(excerpt) FOR PURPOSES OF EXEMPTION FROM COMMUNITY SERVICE</b>
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**Social Security Act:**

**216(i)(1):** Except for purposes of sections 202(d), 202(e), 202(f), 223, and 225, the term “disability” means (A) inability to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to result in death or has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months, or (B) blindness; and the term “blindness” means central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of a correcting lens. An eye which is accompanied by a limitation in the fields of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees shall be considered for purposes of this paragraph as having a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less.

**Section 1416 (excerpt):**

SEC. 1614. [42 U.S.C. 1382c] (a)(1) For purposes of this title, the term “aged, blind, or disabled individual” means an individual who—

(A) is 65 years of age or older, is blind (as determined under paragraph (2)), or is disabled (as determined under paragraph (3)), and

(B)(i) is a resident of the United States, and is either (I) a citizen or (II) an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence or otherwise permanently residing in the United States under color of law (including any alien who is lawfully present in the United States as a result of the application of the provisions of section 212(d)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act), or

(ii) is a child who is a citizen of the United States and, who is living with a parent of the child who is a member of the Armed Forces of the United States assigned to permanent duty ashore outside the United States.

(2) An individual shall be considered to be blind for purposes of this title if he has central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of a correcting lens. An eye which is accompanied by a limitation in the fields of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees shall be considered for purposes of the first sentence of this subsection as having a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less. An individual shall also be considered to be blind for purposes of this title if he is blind as defined under a State plan approved under title X or XVI as in effect for October 1972 and received aid under such plan (on the basis of blindness) for December 1973, so long as he is continuously blind as so defined.

(3)(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (C), an individual shall be considered to be disabled for purposes of this title if he is unable to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to result in death or which has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than twelve months.





<b>EXHIBIT 11-3: PHA DETERMINATION OF EXEMPTION FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE</b>
---

Family: \_\_\_\_\_

Adult family member: \_\_\_\_\_

This adult family member meets the requirements for being exempted from the PHA's community service requirement for the following reason:

- ☐ 62 years of age or older (*Documentation of age in file*)
- ☐ Is a person with disabilities and self-certifies below that he or she is unable to comply with the community service requirement (*Documentation of HUD definition of disability in file*)

**Tenant certification:** I am a person with disabilities and am unable to comply with the community service requirement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Family Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

- ☐ Is the primary caretaker of such an individual in the above category. (*Documentation in file*)
- ☐ Is engaged in work activities (*Verification in file*)
- ☐ Is able to meet requirements under a state program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, or under any other welfare program of the state in which the PHA is located, including a state-administered welfare-to-work program (*Documentation in file*)
- ☐ Is a member of a family receiving assistance, benefits, or services under a state program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, or under any other welfare program of the state in which the PHA is located, including a state-administered welfare-to-work program, and the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) and has not been found by the state or other administering entity to be in noncompliance with such program (*Documentation in file*)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Family Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of PHA Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

<b>EXHIBIT 11-4: CSSR WORK-OUT AGREEMENT</b>
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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Noncompliant Adult: \_\_\_\_\_

Adult family member: \_\_\_\_\_

**Community Service & Self-Sufficiency Requirement (CSSR):**

Under Section 12 of the U.S. Housing Act, the Washington County CDA is required to enforce the community service and self-sufficiency requirement (CSSR). Under the CSSR, each nonexempt adult family member residing in public housing must perform 8 hours per month of community service or self sufficiency activities.

**Noncompliance:** \_\_\_\_ Washington County CDA has found that the nonexempt individual named above is in noncompliance with the CSSR. This work-out agreement is the PHA's written notification to you of this noncompliance.

Our records show that for the most recent lease term you were required to perform \_\_\_\_\_ hours of CSSR activities. However, there were \_\_\_\_\_ hours of verified CSSR activities. Therefore, you are in noncompliance for \_\_\_\_\_ hours.

Washington County CDA will not renew the lease at the end of the current 12-month lease term unless the head of household and noncompliant adult sign a written work-out agreement with Washington County CDA or the family provides written assurance that is satisfactory to Washington County CDA explaining that the noncompliant adult no longer resides in the unit. The regulations require that the work-out agreement include the means through which a noncompliant family member will comply with the CSSR requirement. [24 CFR 960.607(c), Notice PIH 2015-12]. The terms of the CSSR work-out agreement are on the reverse side of this page.

**Enforcement:** Should a family member refuse to sign this CSSR work-out agreement, or fail to comply with the terms of this CSSR work-out agreement, or fail to provide satisfactory written assurance that the noncompliant adult no longer resides in the unit, \_ Washington County CDA is required to initiate termination of tenancy proceedings at the end of the current 12-month lease [24 CFR 966.53(c)].

## Terms of CSSR Work-Out Agreement

**Noncompliant Adult:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check one of the below boxes:**

- ☐ I [head of household or spouse/cohead] certify that the noncompliant adult named above no longer resides in the unit. [Verification attached.]
- ☐ I, the noncompliant adult named above, agree to complete \_\_\_\_\_ hours in the upcoming 12-month lease term. These hours include the \_\_\_\_\_ hours not fulfilled in the most previous lease term, plus the 96 hours for the upcoming lease term.

Below is a description of means through which I will comply with the CSSR requirement:

	Description of Activity	Number of Hours
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
	<b>Total Hours</b>	

**SIGNED AND ATTESTED THIS DATE**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Head of Household

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Noncompliant Adult, if other than Head of Household

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

PHA Official

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 12

### TRANSFER POLICY

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the PHA's transfer policy, based on HUD regulations, HUD guidance, and PHA policy decisions.

This chapter describes HUD regulations and PHA policies related to transfers in four parts:

Part I: Emergency Transfers. This part describes emergency transfers, emergency transfer procedures, and payment of transfer costs.

Part II: PHA Required Transfers. This part describes types of transfers that may be required by the PHA, notice requirements, and payment of transfer costs.

Part III: Transfers Requested by Residents. This part describes types of transfers that may be requested by residents, eligibility requirements, security deposits, payment of transfer costs, and handling of transfer requests.

Part IV: Transfer Processing. This part describes creating a waiting list, prioritizing transfer requests, the unit offer policy, examples of good cause, deconcentration, transferring to another development and reexamination.

The PHA may require the tenant to move from the unit under some circumstances. There are also emergency circumstances under which alternate accommodations for the tenant must be provided, that may or may not require a transfer.

The tenant may also request a transfer, such as a request for a new unit as a reasonable accommodation.

The PHA must have specific policies in place to deal with acceptable transfer requests.

#### PART I: EMERGENCY TRANSFERS

##### 12-I.A. OVERVIEW

HUD categorizes certain situations that require emergency transfers [PH Occ GB, p. 147]. The emergency transfer differs from a typical transfer in that it requires immediate action by the PHA.

In the case of a genuine emergency, it may be unlikely that the PHA will have the time or resources to immediately transfer a tenant. Due to the immediate need to vacate the unit, placing the tenant on a transfer waiting list would not be appropriate. Under such circumstances, if an appropriate unit is not immediately available, the PHA should find alternate accommodations for the tenant until the emergency passes, or a permanent solution, i.e., return to the unit or transfer to another unit, is possible.

## **12-I.B. EMERGENCY TRANSFERS**

If the dwelling unit is damaged to the extent that conditions are created which are hazardous to life, health, or safety of the occupants, the PHA must offer standard alternative accommodations, if available, where necessary repairs cannot be made within a reasonable time [24 CFR 966.4(h)].

The VAWA 2013 final rule requires the PHA to adopt an emergency transfer plan for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking.

### PHA Policy

The following are considered emergency circumstances warranting an immediate transfer of the tenant or family:

Maintenance conditions in the resident's unit, building or at the site that pose an immediate, verifiable threat to the life, health or safety of the resident or family members that cannot be repaired or abated within 24 hours. Examples of such unit or building conditions would include: a gas leak; no heat in the building during the winter; no water; toxic contamination; and serious water leaks.

A verified incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. For instances of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, the threat may be established through documentation outlines in section 16-Vii.D. In order to request the emergency transfer, the requestor must submit an emergency transfer request form (HUD 5383) (Exhibit 16-4 of this ACOP). Although, the PHA may waive this requirement in order to expedite the transfer process.

The PHA will immediately process requests for transfers due to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The PHA will allow a tenant to make an internal emergency transfer under VAWA when a safe unit is immediately available. The PHA defines *immediately available* as a vacant unit that is ready for move-in within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 30 days. If an internal transfer to a safe unit is not immediately available, the PHA will assist the resident in seeking an external emergency transfer outside the PHA's programs.

The PHA has adopted an emergency transfer plan, which is included as Exhibit 16-3 to this plan.

## **12-I.C. EMERGENCY TRANSFER PROCEDURES**

### PHA Policy

If the transfer is necessary because of maintenance conditions provided the damage was not the result of an intentional act, carelessness or negligence on the part of the resident or a member of the resident's household, and an appropriate unit is not immediately available, the PHA may instruct the tenant to contact their rental insurance carrier. PHA may provide temporary accommodations to the tenant by arranging for temporary lodging at a hotel or similar location. If the conditions that required the transfer cannot be repaired, or the condition cannot be repaired in a reasonable amount of time, the PHA

will transfer the resident to the first available and appropriate unit after the temporary relocation.

Emergency transfers that arise due to maintenance conditions are mandatory for the tenant.

If the emergency transfer is necessary to protect a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the PHA will follow the procedures outlined in Exhibit 16-4.

## **12-I.D. COSTS OF TRANSFER**

### PHA Policy

The PHA may bear the reasonable costs of temporarily accommodating the resident and of long term transfers, if any, due to emergency conditions not caused by the resident due to an intentional act, carelessness or negligence on the part of the resident or a member of the resident's household. The PHA's insurance coverage may allow for some help with reasonable costs.

Due to lack of funding the PHA cannot establish a moving allowance but will review on a case by case basis.

The PHA may also refer the resident to the resident's rental insurance carrier.

If the transfer was mandatory, emergency or done as a reasonable accommodation, the family may be offered a payment plan to establish the new security deposit. The payment plan will consist of three equal installments paid over the first three consecutive months.

## **12-II.A. OVERVIEW**

HUD regulations regarding transfers are minimal, leaving it up to the PHA to develop reasonable transfer policies.

The PHA may require that a resident transfer to another unit under some circumstances. For example, the PHA may require a resident to transfer to make an accessible unit available to a disabled family. The PHA may also transfer a resident in order to maintain occupancy standards based on family composition. Finally, a PHA may transfer residents in order to demolish or renovate the unit.

A transfer that is required by the PHA is an adverse action, and is subject to the notice requirements for adverse actions [24 CFR 966.4(e)(8)(i)].

## **12-II.B. TYPES OF PHA REQUIRED TRANSFERS**

### PHA Policy

The types of transfers that may be required by the PHA, include, but are not limited to, transfers to make an accessible unit available for a disabled family, transfers to comply with occupancy standards, transfers for demolition, disposition, revitalization, or rehabilitation, and emergency transfers as discussed in Part I of this chapter.

Transfers required by the PHA are mandatory for the tenant.

### **Transfers to Make an Accessible Unit Available**

When a family is initially given an accessible unit, but does not require the accessible features, the PHA may require the family to agree to move to a non-accessible unit when it becomes available [24 CFR 8.27(b)].

#### PHA Policy

When a non-accessible unit becomes available, the PHA will transfer a family living in an accessible unit that does not require the accessible features, to an available unit that is not accessible. The PHA may wait until a disabled resident requires the accessible unit before transferring the family that does not require the accessible features out of the accessible unit.



## Occupancy Standards Transfers

The PHA may require a resident to move when a reexamination indicates that there has been a change in family composition, and the family is either overcrowded or over-housed according to PHA policy [24 CFR 960.257(a)(4)]. On some occasions, the PHA may initially place a resident in an inappropriately sized unit at lease-up, where the family is over-housed, to prevent vacancies. The public housing lease must include the tenant's agreement to transfer to an appropriately sized unit based on family composition [24 CFR 966.4(c)(3)].

### PHA Policy

The PHA will transfer a family when the family size has changed and the family is now too large (overcrowded) or too small (over-housed) for the unit occupied.

For purposes of the transfer policy, overcrowded and over-housed are defined as follows:

*Overcrowded:* the number of household members exceeds the maximum number of persons allowed for the unit size in which the family resides, according to the chart in Section 5-I.B.

*Over-housed:* the family no longer qualifies for the bedroom size in which they are living based on the PHA's occupancy standards as described in Section 5-I.B.

The PHA may also transfer a family who was initially placed in a unit in which the family was over-housed to a unit of an appropriate size based on the PHA's occupancy standards, when the PHA determines there is a need for the transfer.

The PHA may elect not to transfer an over-housed family in order to prevent vacancies.

A family that is required to move because of family size will be advised by the PHA that a transfer is necessary and that the family has been placed on the transfer list.

Families that request and are granted an exception to the occupancy standards (for either a larger or smaller size unit) in accordance with the policies in Section 5-I.C. will only be required to transfer if it is necessary to comply with the approved exception.

## **Demolition, Disposition, Revitalizations, or Rehabilitation Transfers**

These transfers permit the PHA to demolish, sell or do major capital or rehabilitation work at a building site [PH Occ GB, page 148].

### PHA Policy

The PHA will relocate a family when the unit or site in which the family lives is undergoing major rehabilitation that requires the unit to be vacant, or the unit is being disposed of or demolished. The PHA's relocation plan may or may not require transferring affected families to other available public housing units.

If the relocation plan calls for transferring public housing families to other public housing units, affected families will be placed on the transfer list.

In cases of revitalization or rehabilitation, the family may be offered a temporary relocation if allowed under Relocation Act provisions, and may be allowed to return to their unit, depending on contractual and legal obligations, once revitalization or rehabilitation is complete.

### **12-II.C. ADVERSE ACTION [24 CFR 966.4(e)(8)(i)]**

A PHA required transfer is an adverse action. As an adverse action, the transfer is subject to the requirements regarding notices of adverse actions. If the family requests a grievance hearing within the required timeframe, the PHA may not take action on the transfer until the conclusion of the grievance process.

### **12-II.D. COST OF TRANSFER**

#### PHA Policy

Due to a lack of funding the PHA cannot establish a moving allowance but will review on a case by case basis.

## **PART III: TRANSFERS REQUESTED BY TENANTS**

### **12-III.A. OVERVIEW**

HUD provides the PHA with discretion to consider transfer requests from tenants. The only requests that the PHA is required to consider are requests for reasonable accommodation. All other transfer requests are at the discretion of the PHA. To avoid administrative costs and burdens, this policy limits the types of requests that will be considered by the PHA.

Some transfers that are requested by tenants should be treated as higher priorities than others due to the more urgent need for the transfer.

### **12-III.B. TYPES OF RESIDENT REQUESTED TRANSFERS**

#### PHA Policy

The types of requests for transfers that the PHA will consider are limited to requests for transfers to alleviate a serious or life threatening medical condition, transfers due to a threat of physical harm or criminal activity, reasonable accommodation, transfers to a different unit size as long as the family qualifies for the unit according to the PHA's occupancy standards, and transfers to a location closer to employment. No other transfer requests will be considered by the PHA.

The PHA will consider the following as high priority transfer requests:

- When a transfer is needed to alleviate verified medical problems of a serious or life-threatening nature

- When there has been a verified threat of physical harm or criminal activity. Such circumstances may, at the PHA's discretion, include an assessment by law enforcement indicating that a family member is the actual or potential victim of a criminal attack, retaliation for testimony, a hate crime, or domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. For instances of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the threat may also be established through documentation outlines in section 16-VII.D or by any proof accepted by the PHA.

The CDA, as part of an emergency transfer plan for a person who has been identified through the documentation process in section 16-VII.D or by any proof accepted by the CDA, will notify the tenant of any Public Housing units that the tenant is eligible for and are available for occupancy. If there are no eligible available units or the tenant reasonably believes that the transfer would not be safe, the CDA will inform the tenant of other possible housing providers who may have safe and available units. The tenant will still need to qualify for these units. Please see Chapter 16 for a copy of the Occupancy rights notice and the transfer plan.

When a family requests a transfer as a reasonable accommodation. Examples of a reasonable accommodation transfer include, but are not limited to, a transfer to a first floor unit for a person with mobility impairment, or a transfer to a unit with accessible features

The PHA will consider the following as regular priority transfer requests:

When a family requests a larger bedroom size unit even though the family does not meet the PHA's definition of overcrowded, as long as the family meets the PHA's occupancy standards for the requested size unit

When the head of household or spouse has been employed for over 6 months and is employed 25 miles or more from the public housing unit, has no reliable transportation, and public transportation is not adequate

The PHA will not otherwise consider a lateral move into the same bedroom size.

Transfers requested by the tenant are considered optional for the tenant.

### **12-III.C. ELIGIBILITY FOR TRANSFER**

Transferring residents do not have to meet the admission eligibility requirements pertaining to income or preference. However, the PHA may establish other standards for considering a transfer request [PH Occ GB, p. 150].

#### PHA Policy

Except where reasonable accommodation is being requested, the PHA will only consider transfer requests from residents that meet the following requirements:

- Have not engaged in criminal activity that threatens the health and safety of residents and staff

- Owe no back rent or other charges, or have a pattern of late payment

- Have no housekeeping lease violations or history of damaging property

- Can get utilities turned on in the name of the head of household (applicable only to properties with tenant-paid utilities)

A resident with housekeeping standards violations will not be transferred until the resident passes a follow-up housekeeping inspection and maintains housekeeping standards for one year.

Exceptions to the good record requirement may be made when it is to the PHA's advantage to make the transfer. Exceptions may also be made when the PHA determines that a transfer is necessary to protect the health or safety of a resident who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking and who provides documentation of abuse in accordance with section 16-VII.D of this ACOP.

If a family requested to be placed on the waiting list for a unit size smaller than designated by the occupancy guidelines, the family will not be eligible to transfer to a larger size unit for a period of two years from the date of admission, unless they have a change in family size or composition, or it is needed as a reasonable accommodation.

#### **12-III.D. SECURITY DEPOSITS**

##### PHA Policy

When a family transfers from one unit to another, the family will be required to pay a new security deposit at the new unit. If the transfer was mandatory, emergency or done as a reasonable accommodation, the family may be offered a payment plan to establish the new security deposit. The payment plan will consist of three equal installments paid over the first three consecutive months. If the transfer was tenant requested outside of a reasonable accommodation then the security deposit will be established in full prior to the transfer.

#### **12-III.E. COST OF TRANSFER**

The PHA must pay moving expenses to transfer a resident with a disability to an accessible unit as an accommodation for the resident's disability [Notice PIH 2010-26].

##### PHA Policy

The resident will bear all of the costs of transfer s/he requests. However, the PHA may bear the transfer costs when the transfer is done as a reasonable accommodation.

## **12-III.F. HANDLING OF REQUESTS**

### PHA Policy

Residents requesting a transfer to another unit or development will be required to submit a written request for transfer.

In order to request the emergency transfer under VAWA, the resident will be required to submit an emergency transfer request form (HUD-5383)(Exhibit 16-4 of this ACOP).

The PHA may, on a case by case basis, waive this requirement and accept a verbal request in order to expedite the transfer process. If the PHA accepts an individual's statement, the PHA will document acceptance of the statement in the individual's file in accordance with 16-VII.C of this ACOP. Transfer requests under VAWA will be processed in accordance with the PHA's Emergency Transfer Plan (Exhibit 16-3). In case of a reasonable accommodation transfer, the PHA will encourage the resident to make the request in writing using a reasonable accommodation request form. However, the PHA will consider the transfer request any time the resident indicates that an accommodation is needed whether or not a formal written request is submitted.

The PHA will respond by approving the transfer and putting the family on the transfer list, by denying the transfer, or by requiring more information or documentation from the family, such as documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking in accordance with section 16-VII.D of this ACOP.

If the family does not meet the "good record" requirements under Section 12-III.C., the manager will address the problem and, until resolved, the request for transfer will be denied.

The PHA will respond within ten (10) business days of the submission of the family's request and receipt of verifying documentation. If the PHA denies the request for transfer, the family will be informed of its grievance rights.

## **PART IV: TRANSFER PROCESSING**

### **12-IV.A. OVERVIEW**

Generally, families who request a transfer should be placed on a transfer list and processed in a consistent and appropriate order. The transfer process must be clearly auditable to ensure that residents do not experience inequitable treatment.

### **12-IV.B. TRANSFER LIST**

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will maintain a centralized transfer list to ensure that transfers are processed in the correct order and that procedures are uniform across all properties.

Emergency transfers will not automatically go on the transfer list. Instead emergency transfers will be handled immediately, on a case by case basis. If the emergency cannot be resolved by a temporary accommodation, and the resident requires a permanent transfer, the family will be placed at the top of the transfer list.

Transfers will be processed in the following order:

1. Emergency transfers (hazardous maintenance conditions, VAWA)
2. High-priority transfers (verified medical condition, threat of harm or criminal activity, and reasonable accommodation)
3. Transfers to make accessible units available
4. Demolition, renovation, etc.
5. Occupancy standards
6. Other PHA-required transfers
7. Other tenant-requested transfers

Within each category, transfers will be processed in order of the date a family was placed on the transfer list, starting with the earliest date.

With the approval of the executive director, the PHA may, on a case-by-case basis, transfer a family without regard to its placement on the transfer list in order to address the immediate need of a family in crisis.

Demolition and renovation transfers will gain the highest priority as necessary to allow the PHA to meet the demolition or renovation schedule.

Transfers will take precedence over waiting list admissions.



## **12-IV.C. TRANSFER OFFER POLICY**

### PHA Policy

Residents will receive one offer of a transfer.

When the transfer is required by the PHA, the refusal of that offer without good cause will result in lease termination.

When the transfer has been requested by the resident, the refusal of that offer without good cause will result in the removal of the family from the transfer list. In such cases, the family must wait six months to reapply for another transfer.

## **12-IV.D. GOOD CAUSE FOR UNIT REFUSAL**

### PHA Policy

Examples of good cause for refusal of a unit offer include, but are not limited to, the following:

The family demonstrates to the PHA's satisfaction that accepting the unit offer will require an adult household member to quit a job, drop out of an educational institution or job training program, or take a child out of day care or an educational program for children with disabilities.

The family demonstrates to the PHA's satisfaction that accepting the offer will place a family member's life, health, or safety in jeopardy. The family should offer specific and compelling documentation such as restraining orders, other court orders, risk assessments related to witness protection from a law enforcement agency, or documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking in accordance with section 16-VII.D of this ACOP. Reasons offered must be specific to the family. Refusals due to location alone do not qualify for this good cause exemption.

A health professional verifies temporary hospitalization or recovery from illness of the principal household member, other household members (as listed on final application) or live-in aide necessary to the care of the principal household member.

The unit is inappropriate for the applicant's disabilities, or the family does not need the accessible features in the unit offered and does not want to be subject to a 30-day notice to move.

The unit has lead-based paint and the family includes children under the age of six.

The PHA will require documentation of good cause for unit refusals.

#### **12-IV.E. DECONCENTRATION**

##### PHA Policy

If subject to deconcentration requirements, the PHA may consider its deconcentration goals when transfer units are offered. When feasible, families above the Established Income Range will be offered a unit in a development that is below the Established Income Range, and vice versa, to achieve the PHA's deconcentration goals. A deconcentration offer will be considered a "bonus" offer; that is, if a resident refuses a deconcentration offer, the resident will receive one additional transfer offer.

#### **12-IV.F. REEXAMINATION POLICIES FOR TRANSFERS**

##### PHA Policy

The reexamination date will be changed to the first of the month in which the transfer took place.



## Chapter 13

### LEASE TERMINATIONS

#### INTRODUCTION

Either party to the dwelling lease agreement may terminate the lease in accordance with the terms of the lease. A public housing lease is different from a private dwelling lease in that the family's rental assistance is tied to their tenancy. When the family moves from their public housing unit, they lose their rental assistance. Therefore, there are additional safeguards to protect the family's tenancy in public housing.

Likewise, there are safeguards to protect HUD's interest in the public housing program. The PHA has the authority to terminate the lease because of the family's failure to comply with HUD regulations, for serious or repeated violations of the terms of the lease, and for other good cause. HUD regulations also specify when termination of the lease is mandatory by the PHA.

When determining PHA policy on terminations of the lease, the PHA must consider state and local landlord-tenant laws in the area where the PHA is located. Such laws vary from one location to another, and these variances may be either more or less restrictive than federal law or HUD regulation.

This chapter presents the policies that govern voluntary termination of the lease by the family and the mandatory and voluntary termination of the lease by the PHA. It is presented in four parts:

Part I: Termination by Tenant. This part discusses the PHA requirements for voluntary termination of the lease by the family.

Part II: Termination by PHA - Mandatory. This part describes circumstances when termination of the lease by the PHA is mandatory. This part also explains nonrenewal of the lease for noncompliance with community service requirements.

Part III: Termination by PHA – Other Authorized Reasons. This part describes the PHA's options for lease termination that are not mandated by HUD regulation but for which HUD authorizes PHAs to terminate. For some of these options HUD requires the PHA to establish policies and lease provisions for termination, but termination is not mandatory. For other options the PHA has full discretion whether to consider the options as just cause to terminate as long as the PHA policies are reasonable, nondiscriminatory, and do not violate state or local landlord-tenant law. This part also discusses the alternatives that the PHA may consider in lieu of termination, and the criteria the PHA will use when deciding what actions to take.

Part IV: Notification Requirements. This part presents the federal requirements for disclosure of criminal records to the family prior to termination, the HUD requirements and PHA policies regarding the timing and content of written notices for lease termination and eviction, and notification of the post office when eviction is due to criminal activity. This part also discusses record keeping related to lease termination.



## **PART I: TERMINATION BY TENANT**

### **13-I.A. TENANT CHOOSES TO TERMINATE THE LEASE [24 CFR 966.4(k)(1)(ii) and 24 CFR 966.4(l)(1)]**

The family may terminate the lease at any time, for any reason, by following the notification procedures as outlined in the lease. Such notice must be in writing and delivered to the property site office or the PHA central office or sent by pre-paid first-class mail, properly addressed.

#### PHA Policy

If a family desires to move and terminate their tenancy with the PHA, they must give at least 60 calendar days advance written notice to the PHA of their intent to vacate. When a family must give less than 60 days notice due to circumstances beyond their control the PHA, at its discretion, may waive the 60 day requirement.

The notice of lease termination must be signed by the head of household, spouse, or cohead.



## **PART II: TERMINATION BY PHA – MANDATORY**

### **13-II.A. OVERVIEW**

HUD requires mandatory termination of the lease for certain actions or inactions of the family. There are other actions or inactions of the family that constitute *grounds* for lease termination, but the lease termination is not mandatory. The PHA must establish policies for termination of the lease in these cases where termination is optional for the PHA.

For those tenant actions or failures to act where HUD requires termination, the PHA has no such option. In those cases, the family's lease must be terminated. This part describes situations in which HUD requires the PHA to terminate the lease.

### **13-II.B. FAILURE TO PROVIDE CONSENT [24 CFR 960.259(a) and (b)]**

The PHA must terminate the lease if any family member fails to sign and submit any consent form s/he is required to sign for any reexamination. See Chapter 7 for a complete discussion of consent requirements.

### **13-II.C. FAILURE TO DOCUMENT CITIZENSHIP [24 CFR 5.514(c) and (d) and 24 CFR 960.259(a)]**

The PHA must terminate the lease if (1) a family fails to submit required documentation within the required timeframe concerning any family member's citizenship or immigration status; (2) a family submits evidence of citizenship and eligible immigration status in a timely manner, but United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) primary and secondary verification does not verify eligible immigration status of the family, resulting in no eligible family members; or (3) a family member, as determined by the PHA, has knowingly permitted another individual who is not eligible for assistance to reside (on a permanent basis) in the unit. For (3), such termination must be for a period of at least 24 months. This does not apply to ineligible noncitizens already in the household where the family's assistance has been prorated.

See Chapter 7 for a complete discussion of documentation requirements.



### **13-II.D. FAILURE TO DISCLOSE AND DOCUMENT SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS [24 CFR 5.218(c), 24 CFR 960.259(a)(3), Notice PIH 2018-24]**

The PHA must terminate assistance if a participant family fails to disclose the complete and accurate social security numbers of each household member and the documentation necessary to verify each social security number.

However, if the family is otherwise eligible for continued program assistance, and the PHA determines that the family's failure to meet the SSN disclosure and documentation requirements was due to circumstances that could not have been foreseen and were outside of the family's control, the PHA may defer the family's termination and provide the opportunity to comply with the requirement within a period not to exceed 90 calendar days from the date the PHA determined the family to be noncompliant.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will defer the family's termination and provide the family with the opportunity to comply with the requirement for a period of 90 calendar days for circumstances beyond the participant's control such as delayed processing of the SSN application by the SSA, natural disaster, fire, death in the family, or other emergency, if there is a reasonable likelihood that the participant will be able to disclose an SSN by the deadline.

See Chapter 7 for a complete discussion of documentation and certification requirements.

### **13-II.E. FAILURE TO ACCEPT THE PHA'S OFFER OF A LEASE REVISION [24 CFR 966.4(l)(2)(ii)(E)]**

The PHA must terminate the lease if the family fails to accept the PHA's offer of a lease revision to an existing lease, provided the PHA has done the following:

- The revision is on a form adopted by the PHA in accordance with 24 CFR 966.3 pertaining to requirements for notice to tenants and resident organizations and their opportunity to present comments.
- The PHA has made written notice of the offer of the revision at least 60 calendar days before the lease revision is scheduled to take effect.
- The PHA has specified in the offer a reasonable time limit within that period for acceptance by the family.

See Chapter 8 for information pertaining to PHA policies for offering lease revisions.

#### **13-II.F. METHAMPHETAMINE CONVICTION [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(i)(A)]**

The PHA must immediately terminate the lease if the PHA determines that any household member has ever been convicted of the manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally-assisted housing.

See Part 13-III.B. below for the HUD definition of *premises*.

#### **13-II.G. LIFETIME REGISTERED SEX OFFENDERS [Notice PIH 2012-28]**

Should a PHA discover that a member of an assisted household was subject to a lifetime registration requirement at admission and was erroneously admitted after June 25, 2001, the PHA must immediately terminate assistance for the household member.

In this situation, the PHA must offer the family the opportunity to remove the ineligible family member from the household. If the family is unwilling to remove that individual from the household, the PHA must terminate assistance for the household.

#### **13-II.H. NONCOMPLIANCE WITH COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 966.4(l)(2)(ii)(D), 24 CFR 960.603(b) and 24 CFR 960.607(b)(2)(ii) and (c)]**

The PHA is prohibited from renewing the lease at the end of the 12-month lease term when the family fails to comply with the community service requirements as described in Chapter 11.

#### **13-II.I. DEATH OF A SOLE FAMILY MEMBER [Notice PIH 2012-10]**

The PHA must immediately terminate the lease following the death of the sole family member.



## **PART III: TERMINATION BY PHA – OTHER AUTHORIZED REASONS**

### **13-III.A. OVERVIEW**

Besides requiring PHAs to terminate the lease under the circumstances described in Part II, HUD requires the PHA to establish provisions in the lease for termination pertaining to certain criminal activity, alcohol abuse, and certain household obligations stated in the regulations. While these provisions for lease termination must be in the lease agreement, HUD does not require PHAs to terminate for such violations in all cases. The PHA has the discretion to consider circumstances surrounding the violation or, in applicable situations, whether the offending household member has entered or completed rehabilitation, and the PHA may, as an alternative to termination, require the exclusion of the culpable household member. The PHA must adopt policies concerning the use of these options.

In addition, HUD authorizes PHAs to terminate the lease for other grounds, but for only those grounds that constitute serious or repeated violations of material terms of the lease or for other good cause. The PHA must develop policies pertaining to what constitutes serious or repeated lease violations, and other good cause, based upon the content of the PHA lease. In the development of the terms of the lease, the PHA must consider the limitations imposed by state and local landlord-tenant law, as well as HUD regulations and federal statutes. Because of variations in state and local landlord-tenant law, and because HUD affords PHAs wide discretion in some areas, a broad range of policies could be acceptable.

The PHA also has the option to terminate the tenancies of certain over-income families.

The PHA may consider alternatives to termination and must establish policies describing the criteria the PHA will use when deciding what action to take, the types of evidence that will be acceptable, and the steps the PHA must take when terminating a family's lease.

### **13-III.B. MANDATORY LEASE PROVISIONS [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)]**

This section addresses provisions for lease termination that must be included in the lease agreement according to HUD regulations. Although the provisions are required, HUD does not require PHAs to terminate for such violations in all cases, therefore PHA policies are needed.

#### ***Definitions* [24 CFR 5.100]**

The following definitions will be used for this and other parts of this chapter:

*Covered person* means a tenant, any member of the tenant's household, a guest, or another person under the tenant's control.

*Dating violence* is defined in section 16-VII.B.

*Domestic violence* is defined in section 16-VII.B.

*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 the intent to manufacture, sell, distribute, or use the drug.

*Guest* 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.

*Household* means the family and PHA-approved live-in aide. The term household also includes foster children and/or foster adults that have been approved to reside in the unit [HUD-50058, Instruction Booklet, p. 65].

*Affiliated Individual* is defined in section 16-VII.B.

*Other person under the tenant's control* means that the person, although not staying as a guest 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*.

*Premises* means the building or complex or development in which the public or assisted housing dwelling unit is located, including common areas and grounds.

*Stalking* is defined in section 16-VII.B.

*Sexual Assault* is defined in section 16-VII.B.

*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.

### **Drug Crime On or Off the Premises [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(i)(B)]**

The lease must provide that drug-related criminal activity engaged in on or off the premises by the tenant, member of the tenant's household or guest, or any such activity engaged in on the premises by any other person under the tenant's control is grounds for termination.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will terminate the lease for drug-related criminal activity engaged in on or off the premises by any tenant, member of the tenant's household or guest, and any such activity engaged in on the premises by any other person under the tenant's control.

The PHA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests or convictions of covered persons related to the drug-related criminal activity.

A record or records of arrest will not be used as the sole basis for the termination or proof that the participant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

In making its decision to terminate the lease, the PHA may consider alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors as described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the PHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

### **Illegal Use of a Drug [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(i)(B)]**

The lease must provide that a PHA may evict a family when the PHA determines that a household member is illegally using a drug or that a pattern of illegal use of a drug interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will terminate the lease when the PHA determines that a household member is illegally using a drug or the PHA determines that a pattern of illegal use of a drug interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

A pattern of illegal drug use means more than one incident of any use of illegal drugs during the previous twelve months.

The PHA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests or convictions of household members related to the use or possession of illegal drugs.

A record or records of arrest will not be used as the sole basis for the termination or proof that the participant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

In making its decision to terminate the lease, the PHA may consider alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors as described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the PHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

### **Threat to Other Residents [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(ii)(A)]**

The lease must provide that any criminal activity by a covered person that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents (including PHA management staff residing on the premises) or by persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises is grounds for termination of tenancy.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will terminate the lease when a covered person engages in any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents (including PHA management staff residing on the premises) or by persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.

*Immediate vicinity* means within a three-block radius of the premises.

The PHA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests or convictions of covered persons related to the criminal activity.

A record or records of arrest will not be used as the sole basis for the termination or proof that the participant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

In making its decision to terminate the lease, the PHA may consider alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors as described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the PHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

### **Alcohol Abuse [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(vi)(A)]**

PHAs must establish standards that allow termination of tenancy if the PHA determines that a household member has engaged in abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will terminate the lease if the PHA determines that a household member has engaged in abuse or a pattern of abuse of alcohol that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

A pattern of such alcohol abuse means more than one incident of any such abuse of alcohol during the previous twelve months.

The PHA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests or convictions of household members related to the abuse of alcohol.

A record of arrest(s) will not be used as the sole basis for the termination or proof that the participant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

In making its decision to terminate the lease, the PHA may consider alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors as described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the PHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

**Furnishing False or Misleading Information Concerning Illegal Drug Use or Alcohol Abuse or Rehabilitation [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(vi)(B)]**

PHAs must establish standards that allow termination of tenancy if the PHA determines that a household member has furnished false or misleading information concerning illegal drug use, alcohol abuse, or rehabilitation of illegal drug users or alcohol abusers.

PHA Policy

The PHA will terminate the lease if the PHA determines that a household member has furnished false or misleading information concerning illegal drug use, alcohol abuse, or rehabilitation of illegal drug users or alcohol abusers.

The PHA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests or convictions of household members related to the use or possession of illegal drugs or the abuse of alcohol, and any records or other documentation (or lack of records or documentation) supporting claims of rehabilitation of illegal drug users or alcohol abusers.

In making its decision to terminate the lease, the PHA may consider alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors as described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the PHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.



## **Other Serious or Repeated Violations of Material Terms of the Lease – Mandatory Lease Provisions [24 CFR 966.4(l)(2)(i) and 24 CFR 966.4(f)]**

HUD regulations require certain tenant obligations to be incorporated into the lease. Violations of such regulatory obligations are considered to be serious or repeated violations of the lease and grounds for termination. Incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking may not be construed as serious or repeated violations of the lease by the victim or threatened victim of such violence or stalking [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)].

### PHA Policy

The PHA will terminate the lease for the following violations of tenant obligations under the lease:

Repeated late payment of rent or other charges. Four late payments of rent within a 12-month period shall constitute a repeated late payment for which the PHA may terminate the lease.

Failure to make payments due under the lease, including nonpayment of rent (see Chapter 8 for details pertaining to lease requirements for payments due);

Failure to fulfill the following household obligations:

Not to assign the lease or to sublease the dwelling unit. Subleasing includes receiving payment to cover rent and utility costs by a person living in the unit who is not listed as a family member.

Not to provide accommodations for boarders or lodgers

To use the dwelling unit solely as a private dwelling for the tenant and the tenant's household as identified in the lease, and not to use or permit its use for any other purpose

To abide by necessary and reasonable regulations promulgated by the PHA for the benefit and well-being of the housing project and the tenants which shall be posted in the project office and incorporated by reference in the lease

To comply with all obligations imposed upon tenants by applicable provisions of building and housing codes materially affecting health and safety

To keep the dwelling unit and such other areas as may be assigned to the tenant for the tenant's exclusive use in a clean and safe condition

To dispose of all ashes, garbage, rubbish, and other waste from the dwelling unit in a sanitary and safe manner

To comply with all Family Obligations which are provided to tenants initially and annually thereafter.

To use only in a reasonable manner all electrical, plumbing, sanitary, heating, ventilating, air-conditioning and other facilities and appurtenances including elevators

To refrain from, and to cause the household and guests to refrain from destroying, defacing, damaging, or removing any part of the dwelling unit or project

To pay reasonable charges (other than for normal wear and tear) for the repair of damages to the dwelling unit, or to the project (including damages to project buildings, facilities or common areas) caused by the tenant, a member of the household or a guest

To act, and cause household members or guests to act, in a manner which will not disturb other residents' peaceful enjoyment of their accommodations and will be conducive to maintaining the project in a decent, safe and sanitary condition

In making its decision to terminate the lease, the PHA may consider alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors as described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the PHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

### **13-III.C. OTHER AUTHORIZED REASONS FOR TERMINATION [24 CFR 966.4(l)(2) and (5)(ii)(B)]**

HUD authorizes PHAs to terminate the lease for reasons other than those described in the previous sections. These reasons are referred to as “other good cause.”

#### **Other Good Cause [24 CFR 966.4(l)(2)(ii)(B) and (C)]**

HUD regulations state that the PHA may terminate tenancy for other good cause. The regulations provide a few examples of other good cause, but do not limit the PHA to only those examples. The Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 explicitly prohibits PHAs from considering incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking as “other good cause” for terminating the assistance, tenancy or occupancy rights of the victim or threatened victim of such violence [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)].

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will terminate the lease for the following reasons.

*Fugitive Felon or Parole Violator.* 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, or that, in the case of the State of New Jersey, is a high misdemeanor; or violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under federal or state law.

*Persons subject to sex offender registration requirement.* If any member of the household has, during their current public housing tenancy, become subject to a registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program.

Discovery of facts after admission to the program that would have made the tenant ineligible

Discovery of material false statements or fraud by the tenant in connection with an application for assistance or with a reexamination of income

Failure to furnish such information and certifications regarding family composition and income as may be necessary for the PHA to make determinations with respect to rent, eligibility, and the appropriateness of the dwelling unit size

Failure to transfer to an appropriate size dwelling unit based on family composition, upon appropriate notice by the PHA that such a dwelling unit is available

Failure to permit access to the unit by the PHA after proper advance notification for the purpose of performing routine inspections and maintenance, for making improvements or repairs, or to show the dwelling unit for re-leasing, or without advance notice if there is reasonable cause to believe that an emergency exists

Failure to promptly inform the PHA of the birth, adoption or court-awarded custody of a child. In such a case, promptly means within 5 days of the event.

Failure to abide by the provisions of the PHA pet policy

If the family has breached the terms of a repayment agreement entered into with the PHA

If a family member has violated federal, state, or local law that imposes obligations in connection with the occupancy or use of the premises.

Violations of the Smoke Free Lease Addendum.

If a household member has engaged in or threatened violent or abusive behavior toward PHA personnel.

*Abusive or violent behavior towards PHA personnel* includes verbal as well as physical abuse or violence. Use of racial epithets, or other language, written or oral, that is customarily used to intimidate may be considered abusive or violent behavior.

*Threatening* refers to oral or written threats or physical gestures that communicate intent to abuse or commit violence.

In making its decision to terminate the lease, the PHA may consider alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the PHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

#### ***Family Absence from Unit [24 CFR 982.551(i)]***

It is reasonable that the family may be absent from the public housing unit for brief periods. However, the PHA needs a policy on how long the family may be absent from the unit. Absence in this context means that no member of the family is residing in the unit.

##### **PHA Policy**

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 when one or more family members will be absent from the unit for an extended period. An extended period is defined as any period greater than 14 calendar days. In such a case promptly means 5 days prior to the start of the extended absence.

If a family is absent from the public housing unit for more than 60 consecutive days, and the family does not adequately verify that they are living in the unit, the PHA will terminate the lease for other good cause.

*Abandonment of the unit.* If the family appears to have vacated the unit without giving proper notice, the PHA will follow state and local landlord-tenant law pertaining to abandonment before taking possession of the unit. If necessary, the PHA will secure the unit immediately to prevent vandalism and other criminal activity.

## **Over-Income Families [24 CFR 960.261 and FR 7/26/2018; Notice PIH 2019-11]**

The Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act (HOTMA) of 2016 placed an income limitation on public housing tenancies. The over-income requirement states that after a family's adjusted income has exceeded 120 percent of the area median income (AMI) (or a different limitation established by the HUD Secretary) for two consecutive years, the PHA must either terminate the family's tenancy within six months of the determination or charge the family a monthly rent that is the higher of the applicable fair market rent (FMR) or the amount of the monthly subsidy for the unit, including amounts from the operating or capital funds, as determined by regulations.

Notice PIH 2019-11 also requires that PHAs publish over-income limits in their ACOP and update them no later than 60 days after HUD publishes new income limits each year. The over-income limit is calculated by multiplying the very low-income limit (VLI) by 2.4, as adjusted for family size.

PHAs also have discretion, under 24 CFR 960.261 to adopt policies allowing termination of tenancy for families whose income exceeds the limit for program eligibility. Such policies would exempt families participating in the Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program or currently receiving the earned income disallowance.

### PHA Policy

At annual or interim reexamination, if a family's adjusted income exceeds the applicable over-income limit, the PHA will document the family file and begin tracking the family's over-income status.

If one year after the applicable annual or interim reexamination the family's income continues to exceed the applicable over-income limit, the PHA will notify the family in writing that their income has exceeded the over-income limit for one year and that if the family continues to be over-income for 12 consecutive months, the family will be subject to the PHA's over-income policies.

If two years after the applicable annual or interim reexamination the family's income continues to exceed the applicable over-income limit, the PHA will notify the family to vacate the unit within 6 months.

If, at any time, an over-income family experiences a decrease in income, the family may request an interim redetermination of rent in accordance with PHA policy. If, as a result, the previously over-income family is now below the over-income limit, the family is no longer subject to over-income provisions as of the effective date of the recertification. The PHA will notify the family in writing that over-income policies no longer apply to them. If the family's income later exceeds the over-income limit again, the family is entitled to a new two-year grace period.

The PHA will begin tracking over-income families once these policies have been adopted, but no later than March 24, 2019.

The PHA will rely on the following over-income limits. These numbers will be updated within 60 days of HUD publishing new income limits each year and will be effective for all annual and interim reexaminations once these policies have been adopted.

Family Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Over Income Limit	\$86,880	\$99,360	\$111,720	\$124,808	\$134,040	\$144,000	\$153,960	\$163,800

For families larger than 8 persons, the over-income limit will be calculated by multiplying the applicable very-low income limit by 2.4.

### **13-III.D. ALTERNATIVES TO TERMINATION OF TENANCY**

#### **Exclusion of Culpable Household Member [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(vii)(C)]**

As an alternative to termination of the lease for criminal activity or alcohol abuse HUD provides that the PHA may consider exclusion of the culpable household member. Such an alternative can be used for any other reason where such a solution appears viable in accordance with PHA policy.

Additionally, under the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, the PHA may bifurcate a lease in order to terminate the tenancy of an individual who is a tenant or lawful occupant of a unit and engages in criminal activity directly related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking

#### PHA Policy

The PHA may consider requiring the tenant to exclude a household member in order to continue to reside in the assisted unit, where that household member has participated in or been culpable for action or failure to act that warrants termination.

As a condition of the family's continued occupancy, the head of household must certify that the culpable household member has vacated the unit and will not be permitted to visit or to stay as a guest in the assisted unit. The family must present evidence of the former household member's current address upon PHA request.

A restraining order or no trespass order may be used as evidence that the household member is out of the unit if a current address is unavailable. The tenant family will pay all costs associated with establishing the restraining order or no trespass.

#### **Repayment of Family Debts**

#### PHA Policy

If a family owes rent amounts to the PHA, as a condition of continued occupancy, the PHA will require the family to repay the full amount or to enter into a repayment agreement, within 10 days of receiving notice from the PHA of the amount owed. See Chapter 16 for policies on repayment agreements.

### **13-III.E. CRITERIA FOR DECIDING TO TERMINATE TENANCY**

A PHA that has grounds to terminate a tenancy is not required to do so, except as explained in Part II of this chapter, and may consider all of the circumstances relevant to a particular case before making a decision.

#### **Evidence [24 CFR 982.553(c)]**

For criminal activity, HUD permits the PHA to terminate the lease if a *preponderance of the evidence* indicates that a household member has engaged in the activity, regardless of whether the household member has been convicted, and without satisfying the standard of proof used for a criminal conviction.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will use the preponderance of the evidence as the standard for making all termination decisions.

*Preponderance of the 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. Preponderance of the evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence.

## **Consideration of Circumstances [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(vii)(B)]**

Although it is required that certain lease provisions exist for criminal activity and alcohol abuse, HUD provides that the PHA may consider all circumstances relevant to a particular case in order to determine whether or not to terminate the lease.

Such relevant circumstances can also be considered when terminating the lease for any other reason.

### PHA Policy

The PHA may consider the following facts and circumstances before deciding whether to terminate the lease for any of the HUD required lease provisions or for any other reasons:

The seriousness of the offending action, especially with respect to how it would affect other residents' safety and property.

The extent of participation or culpability of the leaseholder, or other household members, in the offending action, including whether the culpable member is a minor, a person with disabilities, or (as discussed further in section 13-III.F) a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking

The effects that the eviction will have on other family members who were not involved in the action or failure to act

The effect on the community of the termination, or of the PHA's failure to terminate the tenancy

The effect of the PHA's decision on the integrity of the public housing program

The demand for housing by eligible families who will adhere to lease responsibilities

The extent to which the leaseholder has shown personal responsibility and whether they have taken all reasonable steps to prevent or mitigate the offending action

The length of time since the violation occurred, including the age of the individual at the time of the conduct, as well as the family's recent history, and the likelihood of favorable conduct in the future.

While a record or records of arrest will not be used as the sole basis for termination, an arrest may, however, trigger an investigation to determine whether the participant actually engaged in disqualifying criminal activity. As part of its investigation, the PHA may obtain the police report associated with the arrest and consider the reported circumstances of the arrest. The PHA may also consider:

- Any statements made by witnesses or the participant not included in the police report
- Whether criminal charges were filed
- Whether, if filed, criminal charges were abandoned, dismissed, not prosecuted, or ultimately resulted in acquittal.



- Any other evidence relevant to determining whether or not the participant engaged in disqualifying activity.

Evidence of criminal conduct will be considered if it indicates a demonstrable risk to safety and/or property.

In the case of program abuse, the dollar amount of the underpaid rent and whether or not a false certification was signed by the family

### **Consideration of Rehabilitation [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(vii)(D)]**

HUD authorizes PHAs to take into consideration whether a household member who had used illegal drugs or abused alcohol and is no longer engaging in such use or abuse is participating in or has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program.

#### PHA Policy

In determining whether to terminate the lease for illegal drug use or a pattern of illegal drug use, or for abuse or a pattern of abuse of alcohol, by a household member who is no longer engaging in such use or abuse, the PHA will consider whether such household member has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program.

For this purpose the PHA will require the tenant to submit evidence of the household member's successful completion of a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program. Documentation of on-going participation in AA, NA or other support groups related to addiction will be used in conjunction with successful completion of a supervised rehabilitation program to determine the recovery of a household member.

### **Reasonable Accommodation [24 CFR 966.7]**

If the family includes a person with disabilities, the PHA's decision to terminate the family's lease is subject to consideration of reasonable accommodation in accordance with 24 CFR Part 8.

#### PHA Policy

If a family indicates that the behavior of a family member with a disability is the reason for a proposed termination of lease, the PHA will determine whether the behavior is related to the disability. If so, upon the family's request, the PHA will determine whether alternative measures are appropriate as a reasonable accommodation. The PHA will only consider accommodations that can reasonably be expected to address the behavior that is the basis of the proposed lease termination. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of reasonable accommodation.

### **Nondiscrimination Limitation [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(vii)(F)]**

The PHA's eviction actions must be consistent with fair housing and equal opportunity provisions of 24 CFR 5.105.

### **13-III.F. TERMINATIONS RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT OR STALKING**

This section addresses the protections against termination of tenancy that the Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) provides for public housing residents who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. For general VAWA requirements and PHA policies pertaining to notification, documentation, and confidentiality, see section 16-VII of this ACOP, where definitions of key VAWA terms are also located.

#### **VAWA Protections against Termination [24 CFR 5.2005(c)]**

VAWA provides that no person may deny assistance, tenancy, or occupancy rights to public housing to a tenant on the basis or as a direct result of criminal activity directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that is engaged in by a member of the household of the tenant or any guest or other person under the control of the tenant., if the tenant or affiliated individual is the victim or threatened victim of such domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking [FR Notice 8/6/13].

VAWA further provides that incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking may not be construed either as serious or repeated violations of the lease by the victim or threatened victim of such violence or as good cause for terminating the tenancy or occupancy rights of the victim of such violence [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1), FR Notice 8/6/13].

#### **Limits on VAWA Protections [24 CFR 5.2005(d) and (e), FR Notice 8/6/13]**

While VAWA prohibits a PHA from using domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking as the cause for a termination or eviction action against a public housing tenant who is the victim of the abuse, the protections it provides are not absolute. Specifically:

- VAWA does not limit a PHA's otherwise available authority to terminate assistance to or evict a victim for lease violations not premised on an act of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking providing that the PHA does not subject the victim to a more demanding standard than the standard to which it holds other tenants.
- VAWA does not limit a PHA's authority to terminate the tenancy of any public housing tenant if the PHA can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing service to the property if that tenant's tenancy is not terminated.

HUD regulations define *actual and imminent threat* to mean words, gestures, actions, or other indicators of a physical threat that (a) is real, (b) would occur within an immediate time frame, and (c) could result in death or serious bodily harm [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(2) and (e)]. In determining whether an individual would pose an actual and imminent threat, the factors to be considered include:

- The duration of the risk
- The nature and severity of the potential harm
- The likelihood that the potential harm will occur
- The length of time before the potential harm would occur [24 CFR 5.2005(e)]

In order to demonstrate an actual or imminent threat, the PHA must have an objective evidence of words, gestures, actions, or other indicators. Even when a victim poses an actual and imminent threat, however, HUD regulations authorize a PHA to terminate the victim's assistance "only when there are no other actions that could be taken to reduce or eliminate the threat, including but not limited to transferring the victim to a different unit, barring the perpetrator from the property, contacting law enforcement to increase police presence or develop other plans to keep the property safe, or seeking other legal remedies to prevent the perpetrator from acting on a threat" [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(3)]. Additionally, HUD regulations state that restrictions "predicated on public safety cannot be based on stereotypes, but must be tailored to particularized concerns about individual residents" [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(3)].

#### PHA Policy

In determining whether a public housing tenant who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking is an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or neighbors or those employed at or providing service to a property, the PHA will consider the following, and any other relevant, factors:

Whether the threat is toward an employee, a neighbor or tenant other than the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking

Whether the threat is a physical danger beyond a speculative threat

Whether the threat is likely to happen within a an immediate time frame

Whether the threat to other tenants or employees can be eliminated in some other way, such as by helping the victim relocate to a confidential location, transferring the victim to another unit, or seeking a legal remedy to prevent the perpetrator from acting on the threat

If the tenant wishes to contest the PHA's determination that he or she is an actual and imminent threat to other tenants, neighbors or employees, the tenant may do so as part of the grievance hearing or in a court proceeding.

#### **Documentation of Abuse [24 CFR 5.2007]**

##### PHA Policy

When an individual facing termination of tenancy for reasons related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking claims protection under VAWA, the PHA will request in writing that the individual provide documentation supporting the claim in accordance with the policies in section 16-VII.D of this ACOP.

The PHA reserves the right to waive the documentation requirement if it determines that a statement or other corroborating evidence from the individual will suffice. In such cases the PHA will document the waiver in the individual's file.

## **Terminating or Evicting a Perpetrator of Domestic Violence**

Although VAWA provides protection from termination for victims of domestic violence, it does not provide such protection for perpetrators. In fact, VAWA gives the PHA the explicit authority to bifurcate a lease, or remove a household member from a lease, “in order to evict, remove, terminate assistance to any individual who is a tenant or lawful occupant of the housing and who engages in criminal activity directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against an affiliated individual or other individual, without evicting, removing, terminating assistance to, or otherwise penalizing a victim of such criminal activity who is also a tenant or lawful occupant of the housing[FR Notice 8/6/13]. Moreover, HUD regulations impose on the PHA the obligation to consider lease bifurcation in any circumstances involving domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking [24 CFR 966.4(e)(9)].

Specific lease language affirming the PHA’s authority to bifurcate a lease is not necessary, and the authority supersedes any local, state, or federal law to the contrary. However, if the PHA chooses to exercise its authority to bifurcate a lease, it must follow any procedures prescribed by HUD or by applicable local, state, or federal law for eviction, lease termination, or termination of assistance. This means that the PHA must follow the same rules when terminating or evicting an individual as it would when terminating or evicting an entire family [FR Notice 3/16/07 ]. However, perpetrators should be given no more than 30 days notice of termination in most cases [Notice PIH 2017-08].

### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will bifurcate a family’s lease and terminate the tenancy of a family member if the PHA determines that the family member has committed criminal acts of physical violence against another family member or others. This action will not affect the tenancy or program assistance of the remaining, nonculpable family members.

In making its decision, the PHA will consider all credible evidence, including, but not limited to, a signed certification (form HUD-5382) or other documentation of abuse submitted to the PHA by the victim in accordance with this section and section 16-VII.D. The PHA will also consider the factors in section 13.III.E. Upon such consideration, the PHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to bifurcate the lease and terminate the tenancy of the culpable family member.

If the PHA does bifurcate the lease and terminate the tenancy of the culpable family member, it will do so in accordance with the lease, applicable law, and the policies in this ACOP. If the person removed from the lease was the only tenant eligible to receive assistance, the PHA must provide any remaining tenant a change to establish eligibility for the unit. If the remaining tenant cannot do so , the PHA must provide the tenant reasonable time to find new housing or to establish eligibility for another housing program covered by VAWA 2013.

## **PART IV: NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS, EVICTION PROCEDURES AND RECORD KEEPING**

### **13-IV.A. OVERVIEW**

HUD regulations specify the requirements for the notice that must be provided prior to lease termination. This part discusses those requirements and the specific requirements that precede and follow termination for certain criminal activities which are addressed in the regulations. This part also discusses specific requirements pertaining to the actual eviction of families and record keeping.

### **13-IV.B. CONDUCTING CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECKS [24 CFR 5.903(e)(ii) and 24 CFR 960.259]**

HUD authorizes PHAs to conduct criminal records checks on public housing residents for lease enforcement and eviction. PHA policy determines when the PHA will conduct such checks.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will conduct criminal records checks when it has come to the attention of the PHA, either from local law enforcement or by other means, that an individual has engaged in the destruction of property, illegal activity, engaged in violent activity against another person, or has interfered with the right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or neighbors. Such checks will also include sex offender registration information. In order to obtain such information, all adult household members must sign consent forms for release of criminal conviction and sex offender registration records on an annual basis.

The PHA may not pass along to the tenant the costs of a criminal records check.

### **13-IV.C. DISCLOSURE OF CRIMINAL RECORDS TO FAMILY [24 CFR 5.903(f), 24 CFR 5.905(d) and 24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(iv)]**

In conducting criminal records checks, if the PHA uses the authority of 24 CFR 5.903 and 5.905 to obtain such information, certain protections must be afforded the tenant before any adverse action is taken. In such cases if the PHA obtains criminal records information from a state or local agency showing that a household member has been convicted of a crime, or is subject to a sex offender registration requirement, relevant to lease enforcement or eviction, the PHA must notify the household of the proposed action and must provide the subject of the record and the tenant a copy of such information, and an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information before an eviction or lease enforcement action is taken.

#### PHA Policy

In all cases where criminal record or sex offender registration information would result in lease enforcement or eviction, the PHA will notify the household in writing of the proposed adverse action and will provide the subject of the record and the tenant a copy of such information, and an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information before an eviction or lease enforcement action is taken.

The family will be given 10 business days from the date of the PHA notice, to dispute in writing the accuracy and relevance of the information. If the family does not provide the PHA with a written dispute of the information within that 10 business day period, the PHA will proceed with the termination action.

Should the tenant not exercise their right to dispute prior to any adverse action, the tenant may have the right to dispute in the grievance hearing or court trial.

### **13-IV.D. LEASE TERMINATION NOTICE [24 CFR 966.4(l)(3)]**

#### **Form, Delivery, and Content of the Notice**

Notices of lease termination must be in writing. The notice must state the specific grounds for termination, the date the termination will take place, the resident's right to reply to the termination notice, and their right to examine PHA documents directly relevant to the termination or eviction. If the PHA does not make the documents available for examination upon request by the tenant, the PHA may not proceed with the eviction [24 CFR 966.4(m)].

#### **PHA Policy**

If the PHA offers remote hearings, the notice will also state that the resident may request a remote hearing.

If the PHA will require that the hearing be conducted remotely, at the time the notice is sent to the resident information them of the right to request a hearing, the resident will be notified that the hearing will be conducted remotely. The resident will be informed of the processes involved in a remote hearing and that the PHA will provide technical assistance, if needed, before the hearing.

When the PHA is required to offer the resident an opportunity for a grievance hearing, the notice must also inform the resident of their right to request a hearing in accordance with the PHA's grievance procedure. In these cases, the tenancy shall not terminate until the time for the tenant to request a grievance hearing has expired and the grievance procedure has been completed.

When the PHA is not required to offer the resident an opportunity for a grievance hearing because HUD has made a due process determination and the lease termination is for criminal activity that threatens health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment or for drug-related criminal activity, the notice of lease termination must state that the tenant is not entitled to a grievance hearing on the termination. It must specify the judicial eviction procedure to be used by the PHA for eviction of the tenant, and state that HUD has determined that the eviction procedure provides the opportunity for a hearing in court that contains the basic elements of due process as defined in HUD regulations. The notice must also state whether the eviction is for a criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises of other residents or employees of the PHA, or for a drug-related criminal activity on or off the premises.

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will attempt to deliver notices of lease termination to the unit.. In addition, the notice will be sent by first-class certified mail the same day.

All notices of lease termination will include a copy of the form HUD-5382 and HUD 5380 (Notice of Occupancy Rights) to accompany the termination notice. Any tenant who claims that the cause for termination involves domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking of which the tenant or affiliated individual f the tenant is the victim will be given the opportunity to provide documentation in accordance with the policies in sections 13-III.F and 16-VII.D.



### **Timing of the Notice [24 CFR 966.4(l)(3)(i)]**

The PHA must give written notice of lease termination of:

- 14 calendar days in the case of failure to pay rent
- A reasonable period of time considering the seriousness of the situation (but not to exceed 30 calendar days)

If the health or safety of other residents, PHA employees, or persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises is threatened

If any member of the household has engaged in any drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity

If any member of the household has been convicted of a felony

- 30 calendar days in any other case, except that if a state or local law allows a shorter notice period, such shorter period shall apply

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will give written notice of 14 calendar days for nonpayment of rent or other charges. For all other lease terminations the PHA will give 30 calendar days written notice or, if state or local law allows less than 30 days, such shorter notice will be given.

The Notice to Vacate that may be required under state or local law may be combined with or run concurrently with the notice of lease termination.

### **Notice of Nonrenewal Due to Community Service Noncompliance [24 CFR 966.4(l)(2)(ii)(D), 24 CFR 960.603(b) and 24 CFR 960.607(b)]**

When the PHA finds that a family is in noncompliance with the community service requirement, the tenant and any other noncompliant resident must be notified in writing of this determination. Notices of noncompliance will be issued in accordance with the requirements and policies in Section 11-I.E.

#### PHA Policy

If after receiving a notice of initial noncompliance the family does not request a grievance hearing, or does not take either corrective action required by the notice within the required timeframe, a termination notice will be issued in accordance with the policies above.

If a family agreed to cure initial noncompliance by signing an agreement and is still in noncompliance after being provided the 12-month opportunity to cure, the family will be issued a notice of continued noncompliance. The notice of continued noncompliance will be sent in accordance with the policies in Section 11-I.E. and will also serve as the notice of termination of tenancy.

### **Notice of Termination Based on Citizenship Status [24 CFR 5.514 (c) and (d)]**

In cases where termination of tenancy is based on citizenship status, HUD requires the notice of termination to contain additional information. In addition to advising the family of the reasons their assistance is being terminated, the notice must also advise the family of any of the following that apply: the family's eligibility for proration of assistance, the criteria and procedures for obtaining relief under the provisions for preservation of families, the family's right to request an appeal to the USCIS of the results of secondary verification of immigration status and to submit additional documentation or a written explanation in support of the appeal, and the family's right to request an informal hearing with the PHA either upon completion of the USCIS appeal or in lieu of the USCIS appeal. Please see Chapter 14 for the PHA's informal hearing procedures.

### **13-IV.E. EVICTION [24 CFR 966.4(l)(4) and 966.4(m)]**

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. The PHA may only evict the tenant from the unit by instituting a court action, unless the law of the jurisdiction permits eviction by administrative action, after a due process administrative hearing, and without a court determination of the rights and liabilities of the parties.

#### PHA Policy

When a family does not vacate the unit after receipt of a termination notice, by the deadline given in the notice, the PHA will follow state and local landlord-tenant law in filing an eviction action with the local court that has jurisdiction in such cases.

If the eviction action is finalized in court and the family remains in occupancy beyond the deadline to vacate given by the court, the PHA will seek the assistance of the court to remove the family from the premises as per state and local law.

The PHA may not proceed with an eviction action if the PHA has not made available the documents to be used in the case against the family, and has not afforded the family the opportunity to examine and copy such documents in accordance with the provisions of 24 CFR 966.4(l)(3) and (m).

#### **13-IV.F. NOTIFICATION TO POST OFFICE [24CFR 966.4(l)(5)(iii)(B)]**

When the PHA evicts an individual or family for criminal activity, including drug-related criminal activity, the PHA must notify the local post office serving the dwelling unit that the individual or family is no longer residing in the unit.

#### **13-IV.G. RECORD KEEPING**

For more information concerning general record keeping, see Chapter 16.

##### PHA Policy

A written record of every termination and/or eviction will be maintained by the PHA and will contain the following information:

- Name of resident, number and identification of unit occupied

- Date of the notice of lease termination and any other notices required by state or local law; these notices may be on the same form and will run concurrently

- Specific reason(s) for the notices, citing the lease section or provision that was violated, and other facts pertinent to the issuing of the notices described in detail (other than any criminal history reports obtained solely through the authorization provided in 24 CFR 5.903 and 5.905)

- Date and method of notifying the resident

- Summaries of any conferences held with the resident including dates, names of conference participants, and conclusions

## **Chapter 14**

### **GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses grievances and appeals pertaining to PHA actions or failures to act that adversely affect public housing applicants or residents. The policies are discussed in the following three parts:

Part I: Informal Hearings for Public Housing Applicants. This part outlines the requirements and procedures for informal hearings for public housing applicants.

Part II: Informal Hearings with Regard to Noncitizens. This part discusses informal hearings regarding citizenship status and where they differ from the requirements for general applicant and tenant grievances.

Part III: Grievance Procedures for Public Housing Residents. This part outlines the requirements and procedures for handling grievances for public housing residents.

Note that this chapter is not the PHA's grievance procedure. The grievance procedure is contained in the lease as well as the ACOP. This chapter of the ACOP provides the policies that drive the grievance procedure.

#### **PART I: INFORMAL HEARINGS FOR PUBLIC HOUSING APPLICANTS**

##### **14-I.A. OVERVIEW**

When the PHA makes a decision that has a negative impact on an applicant family, the family is often entitled to appeal the decision. For applicants, the appeal takes the form of an informal hearing. HUD regulations do not provide a structure for or requirements regarding informal hearings for applicants (except with regard to citizenship status, to be covered in Part II). This part discusses the PHA policies necessary to respond to applicant appeals through the informal hearing process.

#### **14-I.B. INFORMAL HEARING PROCESS [24 CFR 960.208(a) and PH Occ GB, p. 58]**

Informal hearings are provided for public housing applicants. An applicant is someone who has applied for admission to the public housing program but is not yet a tenant in the program. Informal hearings are intended to provide a means for an applicant to dispute a determination of ineligibility for admission to a project [24 CFR 960.208(a)]. Applicants to public housing are not entitled to the same hearing process afforded tenants under the PHA grievance procedures [24 CFR 966.53(a) and PH Occ GB, p. 58].

Informal hearings provide applicants the opportunity to review the reasons for denial of admission and to present evidence to refute the grounds for denial.

##### **Use of Informal Hearing Process**

While the PHA must offer the opportunity of an informal hearing to applicants who have been determined as ineligible for admission, the PHA could make the informal hearing process available to applicants who wish to dispute other PHA actions that adversely affect them.

##### PHA Policy

The PHA will only offer informal hearings to applicants for the purpose of disputing denials of admission. The unit will not be held during the informal hearing process. If the decision is overturned the applicant will be returned to the waiting list.

##### **Notice of Denial [24 CFR 960.208(a)]**

The PHA must give an applicant prompt notice of a decision denying eligibility for admission. The notice must contain a brief statement of the reasons for the PHA decision and must also state that the applicant may request an informal hearing to dispute the decision. The notice must describe how to obtain the informal hearing.

##### PHA Policy

As applicable the PHA's notice of denial will include information about required or requested remote informal hearings.

When denying eligibility for admission, the PHA must provide the family a notice of VAWA rights (form HUD-5380, Notice of Occupancy Rights) as well as a HUD VAWA self-certification form (form HUD 5382) in accordance with the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, and as outlines in 16-VII.C. The notice and self-certification form must accompany the written notification of the denial of eligibility determination.

Prior to notification of denial based on information obtained from criminal or sex offender registration records, the family, in some cases, must be given the opportunity to dispute the information in those records which would be the basis of the denial. See Section 3-III.G for details concerning this requirement.

## **Scheduling an Informal Hearing**

### PHA Policy

A request for an informal hearing must be made in writing and delivered to the PHA either in person or by first class mail, by the close of the business day, no later than 10 business days from the date of the PHA's notification of denial of admission.

The PHA will schedule and send written notice of the informal hearing within 10 business days of the family's request.

If the PHA informal hearing will be conducted remotely, at the time the notice is sent to the family, the family will be informed:

- Regarding the processes involved in a remote informal hearing
- That the PHA will provide technical assistance prior to and during the informal hearing, if needed
- If the family or any individual witness has any technological, resource, or accessibility barriers preventing them from fully accessing the remote informal hearing, the family may inform the PHA and the PHA will assist the family in either resolving the issues or allow the family to participate in an in-person informal hearing, as appropriate.

## **Conducting an Informal Hearing [PH Occ GB, p. 58]**

### PHA Policy

The informal hearing will be conducted by a person other than the one who made or approved the decision under review, or a subordinate of this person.

The applicant will be provided an opportunity to present written or oral objections to the decision of the PHA.

The person conducting the informal hearing will make a recommendation to the PHA, but the PHA is responsible for making the final decision as to whether admission should be granted or denied.

## **Remote Informal Hearings [Notice PIH 2020-32]**

There is no requirement that informal hearings be conducted in-person, and as such, HUD allows PHAs to conduct all or a portion of their informal hearings remotely either over the phone, via video conferencing, or through other virtual platforms. If the PHA chooses to conduct remote informal hearings, applicants may still request an in-person informal hearing, as applicable.

### PHA Policy

The PHA has the sole discretion to require that informal hearings be conducted remotely in case of local, state, or national physical distancing orders, and in cases of inclement weather or natural disaster.

In addition, the PHA will conduct an informal hearing remotely upon request of the applicant as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability, if an applicant

does not have child care or transportation that would enable them to attend the informal hearing, or if the applicant believes an in-person informal hearing would create an undue health risk. The PHA will consider other reasonable requests for a remote informal hearing on a case-by-case basis.

### **Ensuring Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities and LEP Individuals**

As with in-person informal hearings, the platform for conducting remote informal hearings must be accessible to persons with disabilities and the informal hearing must be conducted in accordance with Section 504 and accessibility requirements. This includes ensuring any information, websites, emails, digital notifications, and other virtual platforms are accessible for persons with vision, hearing, and other disabilities. Further, providing effective communication in a digital context may require the use of individualized auxiliary aids or services, such as audio description, captioning, sign language and other types of interpreters, keyboard accessibility, accessible documents, screen reader support, and transcripts. Auxiliary aids or services must be provided in accessible formats, in a timely manner, and in such a way to protect the privacy and independence of the individual. PHAs may never request or require that individuals with disabilities provide their own auxiliary aids or services, including for remote informal hearings.

If no method of conducting a remote informal hearing is available that appropriately accommodates an individual's disability, the PHA may not hold against the individual his or her inability to participate in the remote informal review, and the PHA should consider whether postponing the remote informal hearing to a later date is appropriate or whether there is a suitable alternative.

Due to the individualized nature of disability, the appropriate auxiliary aid or service necessary, or reasonable accommodation, will depend on the specific circumstances and requirements.

As with in-person hearings, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) requirements also apply to remote informal hearings, including the use of interpretation services and document translation. See Chapter 2 for a more thorough discussion of accessibility and LEP requirements, all of which apply in the context of remote informal hearings.

## **Conducting Remote Informal Hearings [Notice PIH 2020-32]**

The PHA must ensure that the lack of technology or inability to use technology for remote informal hearings does not pose a disadvantage to families that may not be apparent to the PHA. The PHA should determine through a survey or other means if these barriers exist prior to conducting the remote informal hearing and, if the family does not have the proper technology to fully participate, either postpone the informal hearing or provide an alternative means of access.

As with in-person informal hearings, the PHA must provide all materials presented, whether paper or electronic, to the family prior to the remote informal hearing. The family must also be provided with an accessible means by which to transmit their own evidence.

The PHA must ensure that the applicant has the right to hear and be heard. All PHA policies and processes for remote informal hearings will be conducted in accordance with due process requirements and will be in compliance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 966.56 and the guidance for conducting remote hearings specified in Notice PIH 2020-32.

### PHA Policy

The PHA will conduct remote informal hearings via a video conferencing platform, when available. If, after attempting to resolve any barriers, applicants are unable to adequately access the video conferencing platform at any point, or upon applicant request, the informal hearing will be conducted by telephone conferencing call-in. If the family is unable to adequately access the telephone conferencing call-in at any point, the remote informal hearing will be postponed, and an in-person alternative will be provided promptly within a reasonable time.

At least five business days prior to scheduling the remote hearing, the PHA will provide the family with login information and/or conferencing call-in information and an electronic copy of all materials being presented via first class mail and/or email. The notice will advise the family of technological requirements for the hearing and request the family notify the PHA of any known barriers. The PHA will resolve any barriers using the guidance in Section 6 of Notice PIH 2020-32, including offering the family the opportunity to attend an in-person hearing.

If the informal hearing is to be conducted remotely, the PHA will require the family to provide any documents directly relevant to the informal hearing at least 24 hours before the scheduled hearing through the mail, via email, or text. The PHA will scan and email copies of these documents to the PHA representative and to the person conducting the informal hearing the same day.

Documents will be shared electronically whenever possible.

The PHA will follow up the email with a phone call and/or email to the applicant at least one business day prior to the remote informal hearing to ensure that the applicant received all information and is comfortable accessing the video conferencing or call-in platform.

The PHA will ensure that all electronic information stored or transmitted with respect to the informal hearing is secure, including protecting personally identifiable information (PII), and meets the requirements for accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with LEP.



## **Informal Hearing Decision [PH Occ GB, p. 58]**

### PHA Policy

The PHA will notify the applicant of the PHA's final decision, including a brief statement of the reasons for the final decision.

In rendering a decision, the PHA will evaluate the following matters:

Whether or not the grounds for denial were stated factually in the notice.

The validity of grounds for denial of admission: If the grounds for denial are not specified in the regulations or in PHA policy, then the decision to deny assistance will be overturned. See Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of the grounds for applicant denial.

The validity of the evidence: The PHA will evaluate whether the facts presented prove the grounds for denial of admission. If the facts prove that there are grounds for denial, and the denial is required by HUD, the PHA will uphold the decision to deny admission.

If the facts prove the grounds for denial, and the denial is discretionary, the PHA may consider the recommendation of the person conducting the informal hearing in making the final decision whether to deny admission.

The PHA will notify the applicant of the final decision, including a statement explaining the reason(s) for the decision. The notice will be mailed, with return receipt requested, within 10 business days of the informal hearing, to the applicant and his or her representative, if any.

If the informal hearing decision overturns the denial, processing for admission will resume.

If the family fails to appear for their informal hearing, the denial of admission will stand and the family will be so notified.

### **Reasonable Accommodation for Persons with Disabilities [24 CFR 966.7]**

Persons with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations to participate in the informal hearing process and the PHA must consider such accommodations. The PHA must also consider reasonable accommodation requests pertaining to the reasons for denial if related to the person's disability. See Chapter 2 for more detail pertaining to reasonable accommodation requests.

## **PART II: INFORMAL HEARINGS WITH REGARD TO NONCITIZENS**

### **14-II.A. HEARING AND APPEAL PROVISIONS FOR NONCITIZENS [24 CFR 5.514]**

Denial or termination of assistance based on immigration status is subject to special hearing and notice rules. These special hearings are referred to in the regulations as informal hearings, but the requirements for such hearings are different from the informal hearings used to deny applicants for reasons other than immigration status.

Assistance to a family may not be delayed, denied, or terminated on the basis of immigration status at any time prior to a decision under the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) appeal process. 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 completion of the informal hearing.

A decision against a family member, issued in accordance with the USCIS appeal process or the PHA informal hearing process, does not preclude the family from exercising the right, that may otherwise be available, to seek redress directly through judicial procedures.

#### **Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance [24 CFR 5.514(d)]**

As discussed in Chapters 3 and 13, the notice of denial or termination of assistance for noncitizens must advise the family of any of the following that apply:

- That financial assistance will be denied or terminated and provide a brief explanation of the reasons for the proposed denial or termination of assistance.
- The family may be eligible for proration of assistance.
- In the case of a tenant, the criteria and procedures for obtaining relief under the provisions for preservation of families [24 CFR 5.514 and 5.518].
- That the family has a right to request an appeal to the USCIS of the results of secondary verification of immigration status and to submit additional documentation or explanation in support of the appeal.
- That the family has a right to request an informal hearing with the PHA either upon completion of the USCIS appeal or in lieu of the USCIS appeal.
- For applicants, assistance may not be delayed until the conclusion of the USCIS appeal process, but assistance may be delayed during the period of the informal hearing process.

## **United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Appeal Process [24 CFR 5.514(e)]**

When the PHA receives notification that the USCIS secondary verification failed to confirm eligible immigration status, the PHA must notify the family of the results of the USCIS verification. The family will have 30 days from the date of the notification to request an appeal of the USCIS results. The request for appeal must be made by the family in writing directly to the USCIS. The family must provide the PHA with a copy of the written request for appeal and proof of mailing.

### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will notify the family in writing of the results of the USCIS secondary verification within 10 business days of receiving the results.

The family must provide the PHA with a copy of the written request for appeal and proof of mailing within 10 business days of sending the request to the USCIS.

The family must forward to the designated USCIS office any additional documentation or written explanation in support of the appeal. This material must include a copy of the USCIS document verification request (used to process the secondary request) or such other form specified by the USCIS, and a letter indicating that the family is requesting an appeal of the USCIS immigration status verification results.

The USCIS will notify the family, with a copy to the PHA, of its decision. When the USCIS notifies the PHA of the decision, the PHA must notify the family of its right to request an informal hearing.

### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will send written notice to the family of its right to request an informal hearing within 10 business days of receiving notice of the USCIS decision regarding the family's immigration status.

## **Informal Hearing Procedures for Applicants [24 CFR 5.514(f)]**

After notification of the USCIS decision on appeal, or in lieu of an appeal to the USCIS, an applicant family may request that the PHA provide a hearing. The request for a hearing must be made either within 30 days of receipt of the PHA notice of denial, or within 30 days of receipt of the USCIS appeal decision.

The informal hearing procedures for applicant families are described below.

### ***Informal Hearing Officer***

The PHA must provide an informal hearing before an impartial individual, other than a person who made or approved the decision under review, and other than a person who is a subordinate of the person who made or approved the decision.

### ***Evidence***

The family must be provided the opportunity to examine and copy at the family's expense, at a reasonable time in advance of the hearing, any documents in the possession of the PHA pertaining to the family's eligibility status, or in the possession of the USCIS (as permitted by USCIS requirements), including any records and regulations that may be relevant to the hearing.

#### **PHA Policy**

The family will be allowed to copy any documents related to the hearing at no cost to the family. The family must request discovery of PHA documents no later than 12:00 p.m. on the business day prior to the hearing.

The family must be provided the opportunity to present evidence and arguments in support of eligible status. Evidence may be considered without regard to admissibility under the rules of evidence applicable to judicial proceedings.

The family must also be provided the opportunity to refute evidence relied upon by the PHA, and to confront and cross-examine all witnesses on whose testimony or information the PHA relies.

### ***Representation and Interpretive Services***

The family is entitled to be represented by an attorney or other designee, at the family's expense, and to have such person make statements on the family's behalf.

The family is entitled to request an interpreter. The PHA is obligated to provide a competent interpreter, free of charge, upon request. The family may also or instead provide its own interpreter, at the expense of the family.

### ***Recording of the Hearing***

The family is entitled to have the hearing recorded by audiotape. The PHA may, but is not required to provide a transcript of the hearing.

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will not provide a transcript of an audio taped informal hearing.

### ***Hearing Decision***

The PHA must provide the family with a written notice of the final decision, based solely on the facts presented at the hearing, within 14 calendar days of the date of the informal hearing. The notice must state the basis for the decision.

### **Retention of Documents [24 CFR 5.514(h)]**

The PHA must retain for a minimum of 5 years the following documents that may have been submitted to the PHA by the family, or provided to the PHA as part of the USCIS appeal or the PHA informal hearing process:

- The application for assistance
- The form completed by the family for income reexamination
- Photocopies of any original documents, including original USCIS documents
- The signed verification consent form
- The USCIS verification results
- The request for a USCIS appeal
- The final USCIS determination
- The request for an informal hearing
- The final informal hearing decision

### **Informal Hearing Procedures for Residents [24 CFR 5.514(f)]**

After notification of the USCIS decision on appeal, or in lieu of an appeal to the USCIS, a resident family may request that the PHA provide a hearing. The request for a hearing must be made either within 30 days of receipt of the PHA notice of termination, or within 30 days of receipt of the USCIS appeal decision.

The informal hearing procedures for resident families whose tenancy is being terminated based on immigration status is the same as for any grievance under the grievance procedures for resident families found in Part III below.

## **PART III: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS**

### **14-III.A. REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 966.52]**

PHAs must have a grievance procedure in place through which residents of public housing are provided an opportunity to grieve any PHA action or failure to act involving the lease or PHA policies which adversely affect their rights, duties, welfare, or status. The PHA must not only meet the minimal procedural due process requirements provided under the regulations but must also meet any additional requirements imposed by local, state or federal law.

The PHA grievance procedure must be included, or incorporated by reference in the lease.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA grievance procedure will be incorporated by reference in the tenant lease.

The PHA must provide at least 30 days' notice to tenants and resident organizations setting forth proposed changes in the PHA grievance procedure, and provide an opportunity to present written comments. Comments submitted must be considered by the PHA before adoption of any changes to the grievance procedure by the PHA.

#### PHA Policy

Residents and resident organizations will have 30 calendar days from the date they are notified by the PHA of any proposed changes in the PHA grievance procedure, to submit written comments to the PHA.

The PHA must furnish a copy of the grievance procedure to each tenant and to resident organizations.

#### 14-III.B. DEFINITIONS [24 CFR 966.53; 24 CFR 966.51(a)(2)(i)]

There are several terms used by HUD with regard to public housing grievance procedures, which take on specific meanings different from their common usage. These terms are as follows:

- **Grievance** – any dispute which a tenant may have with respect to PHA action or failure to act in accordance with the individual tenant’s lease or PHA regulations which adversely affect the individual tenant’s rights, duties, welfare or status
- **Complainant** – any tenant whose grievance is presented to the PHA or at the project management office
- **Due Process Determination** – a determination by HUD that law of the jurisdiction requires that the tenant must be given the opportunity for a hearing in court which provides the basic elements of due process before eviction from the dwelling unit
- **Expedited Grievance**—a procedure established by the PHA for any grievance or termination that involves:
  - Any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment or the PHA’s public housing premises by other residents or employees of the PHA; or
  - Any drug related criminal activity on or off the premises.
- **Elements of Due Process** – an eviction action or a termination of tenancy in a state or local court in which the following procedural safeguards are required:
  - Adequate notice to the tenant of the grounds for terminating the tenancy and for eviction
  - Right of the tenant to be represented by counsel
  - Opportunity for the tenant to refute the evidence presented by the PHA including the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses and to present any affirmative legal or equitable defense which the tenant may have
  - A decision on the merits
- **Hearing Officer/Panel** – an impartial person or persons selected by the PHA, other than the person who made or approved the decision under review, or a subordinate of that person. The individual or individuals do not need legal training.
- **Tenant** – the adult person (or persons) (other than a live-in aide)
  - Who resides in the unit, and who executed the lease with the PHA as lessee of the dwelling unit, or, if no such person now resides in the unit,
  - Who resides in the unit, and who is the remaining head of household of the tenant family residing in the dwelling unit
- **Resident Organization** – includes a resident management corporation

### **14-III.C. APPLICABILITY [24 CFR 966.51]**

Grievances could potentially address most aspects of a PHA's operation. However, there are some situations for which the grievance procedure is not applicable.

The grievance procedure is applicable only to individual tenant issues relating to the PHA. It is not applicable to disputes between tenants not involving the PHA. Class grievances are not subject to the grievance procedure and the grievance procedure is not to be used as a forum for initiating or negotiating policy changes of the PHA.

If HUD has issued a due process determination, a PHA may exclude from the PHA grievance procedure any grievance concerning a termination of tenancy or eviction that involves:

- Any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises of other residents or employees of the PHA
- Any violent or drug-related criminal activity on or off such premises; or
- Any criminal activity that resulted in felony conviction of a household member.

In states without due process determinations, PHAs must grant opportunity for grievance hearings for all lease terminations, regardless of cause, with the following exception: PHAs may use expedited grievance procedures for the first two of the three excluded categories listed above. These expedited grievance procedures are described in Section 14-III.E. below.

If HUD has issued a due process determination, the PHA may evict through the state/local judicial eviction procedures. In this case, the PHA is not required to provide the opportunity for a hearing under the PHA's grievance procedure as described above.

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA is located in a HUD-declared due process state. Therefore, the PHA will not offer grievance hearings for lease terminations involving criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises of other residents or employees of the PHA, or for violent or drug related criminal activity on or off the premises, or for any criminal activity that resulted in felony conviction of a household member.

See Chapter 13 for related policies on the content of termination notices.



#### **14-III.D. INFORMAL SETTLEMENT OF GRIEVANCE [24 CFR 966.54]**

HUD regulations state that any grievance must be personally presented, either orally or in writing, to the PHA office or to the office of the housing development in which the complainant resides so that the grievance may be discussed informally and settled without a hearing.

##### PHA Policy

The PHA will accept requests for an informal discussion and settlement of a grievance in writing (including emailed requests), to the management office within 10 business days of the grievable event. Within 10 business days of receipt of the request the PHA will arrange a meeting with the tenant at a mutually agreeable time and confirm such meeting in writing to the tenant.

The informal settlement may be conducted remotely as required by the PHA, or may be conducted remotely upon consideration of the request of the tenant. See 14-III.G for information on how and under what circumstances remote informal settlements may be conducted..

If a tenant fails to attend the scheduled meeting without prior notice, the PHA will reschedule the appointment only if the tenant can show good cause for failing to appear, or if it is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities.

Good cause is defined as an unavoidable conflict which seriously affects the health, safety or welfare of the family.

HUD regulations require that a summary of such discussion will be prepared within a reasonable time and one copy will be given to the tenant and one retained in the PHA's tenant file.

The summary must specify the names of the participants, dates of meeting, the nature of the proposed disposition of the complaint and the specific reasons therefore, and will specify the procedures by which a hearing may be obtained if the complainant is not satisfied.

##### PHA Policy

The PHA will prepare a summary of the informal settlement discussion within 10 business days; one copy to be given to the tenant and one copy to be retained in the PHA's tenant file.

For PHAs who have the option to establish an expedited grievance procedure, and who exercise this option, the informal settlement of grievances is not applicable to those grievances for which the expedited grievance procedure applies.

#### **14-III.E. PROCEDURES TO OBTAIN A HEARING [24 CFR 966.55]**

##### **Requests for Hearing and Failure to Request [24 CFR 966.55(a), (c), and (d)]**

###### PHA Policy

The resident must submit a written request (including emailed requests) for a grievance hearing to the PHA within 5 days of the tenant's receipt of the summary of the informal settlement.

If the complainant does not request a hearing, the PHA's disposition of the grievance under the informal settlement process will become final. However, failure to request a hearing does not constitute a waiver by the complainant of the right to contest the PHA's action in disposing of the complaint in an appropriate judicial proceeding

##### **Scheduling of Hearings [24 CFR 966.56(a)]**

If the complainant has complied with all requirements for requesting a hearing as described above, a hearing must be scheduled by the hearing officer/panel promptly for a time and place reasonably convenient to both the complainant and the PHA. A written notification specifying the time, place and the procedures governing the hearing must be delivered to the complainant and the appropriate PHA official.

###### PHA Policy

Within 10 business days of receiving a written request for a hearing, the hearing officer or the manager will schedule and send written notice of the hearing to the complainant and the PHA.

If the PHA hearing will be conducted remotely, at the time the notice is sent to the family, the family will be notified:

- Regarding the processes involved in a remote grievance hearing;
- That the PHA will provide technical assistance prior to and during the hearing, if needed; and
- That if the family or any individual witness has any technological, resource, or accessibility barriers, the family may inform the PHA and the PHA will assist the family in either resolving the issue or allow the family to participate in an in-person hearing, as appropriate.

The PHA may wish to permit the tenant to request to reschedule a hearing for good cause.

###### PHA Policy

The tenant may request to reschedule a hearing for good cause, or if it is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities. Good cause is defined as an unavoidable conflict which seriously affects the health, safety, or welfare of the family. Requests to reschedule a hearing must be made orally or in writing prior to the hearing date. At its discretion, the PHA may request documentation of the "good cause" prior to rescheduling the hearing.

### **Expedited Grievance Procedure [24 CFR 966.52(a)]**

The PHA may establish an expedited grievance procedure for any grievance concerning a termination of tenancy or eviction that involves:

- Any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or employees of the PHA, or
- Any drug-related criminal activity on or near such premises
- Any criminal activity that resulted in felony conviction of a household member

In such expedited grievances, the informal settlement of grievances as discussed in 14-III.D is not applicable.

The PHA may adopt special procedures concerning expedited hearings, including provisions for expedited notice or scheduling, or provisions for expedited decision on the grievance.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will not offer expedited grievance procedures.

### **14-III.F. SELECTION OF HEARING OFFICER/PANEL [24 CFR 966.55(b)]**

The grievance hearing must be conducted by an impartial person or persons appointed by the PHA, other than the person who made or approved the PHA action under review, or a subordinate of such person.

#### PHA Policy

PHA grievance hearings will be conducted by a single hearing officer and not a panel.

PHAs must describe their policies for selection of a hearing officer in their lease forms. Changes to the public housing lease are subject to a 30 day comment period (24 CFR 966.4)

### **14-III.G. REMOTE HEARINGS (Notice PIH 2020-32)**

There is no requirement that grievance hearings be conducted in-person, and as such, HUD allows PHAs to conduct all or a portion of their grievance hearings remotely either over the phone, via video conferencing, or through other virtual platforms. If the PHA chooses to conduct remote grievance hearings, applicants may still request an in-person hearing, as applicable.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA has the sole discretion to require that hearings be conducted remotely in case of local, state, or national physical distancing orders, and in cases of inclement weather or natural disaster.

In addition, the PHA will conduct a hearing remotely upon request as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability, if a tenant does not have child care or transportation that would enable them to attend the hearing, or if the tenant believes an in-person hearing would create an undue health risk. The PHA will consider other reasonable requests for a remote hearing on a case-by-case basis.

### **Discovery of Documents Before the Remote Hearing**

### PHA Policy

If the hearing will be conducted remotely, the PHA will compile a hearing packet, consisting of all documents the PHA intends to produce at the hearing. The PHA will mail copies of the hearing packet to the tenant, the tenant's representatives, if any, and the hearing officer at least three days before the scheduled remote hearing. The original hearing packet will be in the possession of the PHA representative and retained by the PHA.

If the hearing is to be conducted remotely, the PHA will require the resident to provide any documents directly relevant to the hearing at least 24 hours before the scheduled hearing through the mail, via email, or text. The PHA will scan and email copies of these documents to the hearing officer and the PHA representative the same day they are received.

Documents will be shared electronically whenever possible.

## **Conducting Hearings Remotely**

### **Ensuring Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities and LEP Individuals**

As with in-person grievance hearings, the platform for conducting remote grievance hearings must be accessible to persons with disabilities and the grievance hearings must be conducted in accordance with Section 504 and accessibility requirements. This includes ensuring any information, websites, emails, digital notifications, and other virtual platforms are accessible for persons with vision, hearing, and other disabilities. Further, providing effective communication in a digital context may require the use of individualized auxiliary aids or services, such as audio description, captioning, sign language and other types of interpreters, keyboard accessibility, accessible documents, screen reader support, and transcripts. Auxiliary aids or services must be provided in accessible formats, in a timely manner, and in such a way to protect the privacy and independence of the individual. PHAs may never request or require that individuals with disabilities provide their own auxiliary aids or services, including for remote grievance hearings.

If no method of conducting a remote grievance hearing is available that appropriately accommodates an individual's disability, the PHA may not hold against the individual his or her inability to participate in the remote grievance hearing, and the PHA should consider whether postponing the remote hearing to a later date is appropriate or whether there is a suitable alternative.

Due to the individualized nature of disability, the appropriate auxiliary aid or service necessary, or reasonable accommodation will depend on the specific circumstances and requirements.

As with in-person reviews, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) requirements also apply to remote grievance hearings, including the use of interpretation services and document translation. See Chapter 2 for a more thorough discussion of accessibility and LEP requirements, all of which apply in the context of remote grievance hearings.

## **Conducting Hearings Remotely**

The PHA must ensure that the lack of technology or inability to use technology for remote grievance hearings does not pose a disadvantage to families that may not be apparent to the PHA. The PHA should determine through a survey or other means if these barriers exist prior to conducting the remote grievance hearing and, if the family does not have the proper technology to fully participate, either postpone the hearing or provide an alternative means of access.

As with in-person grievance hearings, the PHA must provide all materials presented, whether paper or electronic, to the family prior to the remote grievance hearing. The family must also be provided with an accessible means by which to transmit their own evidence.

The PHA's essential responsibility is to ensure grievance hearings meet the requirements of due process and comply with HUD regulations. Therefore, all PHA policies and processes for remote grievance hearings will be conducted in accordance with due process requirements and will be in compliance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 966.56 and the guidance for conducting remote hearings specified in Notice PIH 2020-32.

### **PHA Policy**

The PHA will conduct remote grievance hearings via a video conferencing platform, when available. If, after attempting to resolve any barriers, participants are unable to adequately access the video conferencing platform at any point, or upon request, the grievance hearing will be conducted by telephone conferencing call-in. If the family is unable to adequately access the telephone conferencing call-in at any point, the remote grievance hearing will be postponed, and an in-person alternative will be provided promptly within a reasonable time.

At least five business days prior to scheduling the remote hearing, the PHA will provide the family with login information and/or conferencing call-in information and an electronic copy of all materials being presented via first class mail and/or email. The notice will advise the family of technological requirements for the hearing and request the family notify the PHA of any known barriers. The PHA will resolve any barriers using the guidance in Section 6 of Notice PIH 2020-32, including offering the family the opportunity to attend an in-person hearing.

The PHA will follow up with a phone call and/or email to the family at least one business day prior to the remote grievance hearing to ensure that the family received all information and is comfortable accessing the video conferencing or call-in platform.

The PHA will ensure that all electronic information stored or transmitted with respect to the grievance hearing is secure, including protecting personally identifiable information (PII), and meets the requirements for accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with LEP.

## **14-III.H. PROCEDURES GOVERNING THE HEARING [24 CFR 966.56]**

### **Rights of Complainant [24 CFR 966.56(b)]**

The complainant will be afforded a fair hearing. This includes:

- The opportunity to examine before the grievance hearing any PHA documents, including records and regulations that are directly relevant to the hearing. The tenant must be allowed to copy any such document at the tenant's expense. If the PHA does not make the document available for examination upon request by the complainant, the PHA may not rely on such document at the grievance hearing.

#### PHA Policy

The tenant will be allowed to copy any documents related to the hearing at no cost to the family. There will be no charge for documents emailed by the PHA. The family must request discovery of PHA documents no later than 12:00 p.m. on the business day prior to the hearing.

- The right to be represented by counsel or other person chosen to represent the tenant, and to have such person make statements on the tenant's behalf.

#### PHA Policy

Hearings may be attended by the following applicable persons:

The PHA representative(s) and any witnesses for the PHA

The tenant and any witnesses for the tenant

The tenant's counsel or other representative

Any other person approved by the PHA as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability

- The right to a private hearing unless the complainant requests a public hearing.
- The right to present evidence and arguments in support of the tenant's complaint, to controvert evidence relied on by the PHA or project management, and to confront and cross-examine all witnesses upon whose testimony or information the PHA or project management relies.
- A decision based solely and exclusively upon the facts presented at the hearing.

### **Failure to Appear [24 CFR 966.56(d)]**

If the complainant or the PHA fails to appear at a scheduled hearing, the hearing officer/panel may make a determination to postpone the hearing for no more than five business days or may make a determination that the party has waived his/her right to a hearing. Both the complainant and the PHA must be notified of the determination by the hearing officer/panel: Provided, That a determination that the complainant has waived his/her right to a hearing will not constitute a waiver of any right the complainant may have to contest the PHA's disposition of the grievance in an appropriate judicial proceeding.

There may be times when a complainant does not appear due to unforeseen circumstances which are out of their control and are no fault of their own.

#### PHA Policy

If the tenant does not appear at the scheduled time of the hearing, the hearing officer will wait up to 15 minutes. If the tenant appears within 15 minutes of the scheduled time, the hearing will be held. If the tenant does not arrive within 15 minutes of the scheduled time, they will be considered to have failed to appear.

If the tenant fails to appear and was unable to reschedule the hearing in advance, the tenant must contact the PHA within 24 hours of the scheduled hearing date, excluding weekends and holidays. The hearing officer will reschedule the hearing only if the tenant can show good cause for the failure to appear, or it is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities.

"Good cause" is defined as an unavoidable conflict which seriously affects the health, safety, or welfare of the family.



## **General Procedures [24 CFR 966.56(e), (f), and (g)]**

At the hearing, the complainant must first make a showing of an entitlement to the relief sought and thereafter the PHA must sustain the burden of justifying the PHA action or failure to act against which the complaint is directed [24 CFR 966.56(e)].

The hearing must be conducted informally by the hearing officer/panel. The PHA and the tenant must be given the opportunity to present oral or documentary evidence pertinent to the facts and issues raised by the complaint, and to question any witnesses.

### PHA Policy

Any evidence to be considered by the hearing officer must be presented at the time of the hearing. There are four categories of evidence.

**Oral evidence:** the testimony of witnesses

**Documentary evidence:** a writing which is relevant to the case, for example, a letter written to the PHA. Writings include all forms of recorded communication or representation, including letters, emails, words, pictures, sounds, videotapes or symbols or combinations thereof.

**Demonstrative evidence:** Evidence created specifically for the hearing and presented as an illustrative aid to assist the hearing officer, such as a model, a chart or other diagram.

**Real evidence:** A tangible item relating directly to the case.

*Hearsay Evidence* is evidence based not on a witness' personal knowledge. In and of itself, hearsay evidence carries no weight when making a finding of fact. The hearing officer may include hearsay evidence when considering their decision if it is corroborated by other evidence. Even though hearsay evidence is generally admissible in a hearing, the hearing officer will not base a hearing decision on hearsay alone unless there is clear probative value and credibility of the evidence, and the party seeking the change has met the burden of proof.

If the PHA fails to comply with the discovery requirements (providing the tenant with the opportunity to examine PHA documents prior to the grievance hearing), the hearing officer will refuse to admit such evidence.

Other than the failure of the PHA to comply with discovery requirements, the hearing officer has the authority to overrule any objections to evidence.

The complainant or the PHA may arrange, in advance and at the expense of the party making the arrangement, for a transcript of the hearing. Any interested party may purchase a copy of such transcript [24 CFR 966.56(e)].

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will audio tape the hearing. The tenant may request a transcript at their own expense.

The PHA will consider an audio tape of the proceedings is a transcript.

#### **Accommodations of Persons with Disabilities [24 CFR 966.56(f)]**

The PHA must provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities to participate in the hearing. Reasonable accommodation may include qualified sign language interpreters, readers, accessible locations, or attendants.

If the tenant is visually impaired, any notice to the tenant which is required in the grievance process must be in an accessible format.

See Chapter 2 for a thorough discussion of the PHA's responsibilities pertaining to reasonable accommodation.

#### **Limited English Proficiency (24 CFR 966.56(g))**

The PHA must comply with HUD's LEP Final Rule in providing language services throughout the grievance process.

#### **14-III.I. DECISION OF THE HEARING OFFICER/PANEL [24 CFR 966.57]**

The hearing officer/panel must issue a written decision, stating the reasons for the decision, within a reasonable time after the hearing. Factual determinations relating to the individual circumstances of the family must be based on a preponderance of evidence presented at the hearing. A copy of the decision must be sent to the complainant and the PHA. The PHA must retain a copy of the decision in the tenant's folder. A log of all hearing officers decisions must also be maintained by the PHA and made available for inspection by a prospective complainant, his/her representative, or the hearing officer/panel [24 CFR 966.57(a)].

##### **PHA Policy**

In rendering a decision, the hearing officer will consider the following matters:

**PHA Notice to the Family:** The hearing officer will determine if the reasons for the PHA's decision are factually stated in the notice.

**Discovery:** The hearing officer will determine if the family was given the opportunity to examine any relevant documents in accordance with PHA policy.

**PHA Evidence to Support the PHA Decision:** The evidence consists of the facts presented. Evidence is not conclusion and it is not argument. The hearing officer will evaluate the facts to determine if they support the PHA's conclusion.

**Validity of Grounds for Termination of Tenancy (when applicable):** The hearing officer will determine if the termination of tenancy is for one of the grounds specified in the HUD regulations and PHA policies. If the grounds for termination are not specified in the regulations or in compliance with PHA policies, then the decision of the PHA will be overturned.

The hearing officer will issue a written decision to the family and the PHA no later than 14 business days after the close of the hearing. The report will contain the following information:

##### **Hearing information:**

Name of the complainant

Date, time and place of the hearing

Name of the hearing officer

Name of the PHA representative

Name of family representative (if any)

Names of witnesses (if any)

**Background:** A brief, impartial statement of the reason for the hearing and the date(s) on which the informal settlement was held, who held it, and a summary of the results of the informal settlement. Also includes the date the complainant requested the grievance hearing.

**Summary of the Evidence:** The hearing officer will summarize the testimony of each witness and identify any documents that a witness produced in support of his/her testimony and that are admitted into evidence.

**Findings of Fact:** The hearing officer will include all findings of fact, based on a preponderance of the evidence. *Preponderance of the 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. Preponderance of the evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence.

**Conclusions:** The hearing officer will render a conclusion derived from the facts that were found to be true by a preponderance of the evidence. The conclusion will result in a determination of whether these facts uphold the PHA's decision.

**Order:** The hearing report will include a statement of whether the PHA's decision is upheld or overturned. If it is overturned, the hearing officer will instruct the PHA to change the decision in accordance with the hearing officer's determination. In the case of termination of tenancy, the hearing officer will instruct the PHA to restore the family's status.

## **Procedures for Further Hearing**

### PHA Policy

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 will take effect and another hearing will not be granted.

### **Final Decision [24 CFR 966.57(b)]**

The decision of the hearing officer/panel is binding on the PHA which must take the action, or refrain from taking the action cited in the decision unless the PHA Board of Commissioners determines within a reasonable time, and notifies the complainant that:

- The grievance does not concern PHA action or failure to act in accordance with or involving the complainant's lease on PHA policies which adversely affect the complainant's rights, duties, welfare, or status; or
- The decision of the hearing officer/panel is contrary to Federal, state, or local law, HUD regulations or requirements of the annual contributions contract between HUD and the PHA

#### PHA Policy

When the PHA considers the decision of the hearing officer to be invalid due to the reasons stated above, it will present the matter to the PHA Board of Commissioners at the next regular monthly meeting. The Board at the following regular monthly meeting will render the decision. If the Board decides to reverse the hearing officer's decision, it must notify the complainant within 10 business days of this decision.

A decision by the hearing officer/panel, or Board of Commissioners in favor of the PHA or which denies the relief requested by the complainant in whole or in part must not constitute a waiver of any rights, nor effect in any manner whatever, any rights the complainant may have to a subsequent trial or judicial review in court [24 CFR 966.57(c)].

<b>EXHIBIT 14-1: SAMPLE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE</b>
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**Note: The sample procedure provided below is a sample only and is designed to match up with the default policies in the model ACOP. If your PHA has made policy decisions that do not reflect the default policies in the ACOP, you would need to ensure that the procedure matches those policy decisions.**

#### **I. Definitions applicable to the grievance procedure [24 CFR 966.53]**

- A. Grievance: Any dispute a tenant may have with respect to PHA action or failure to act in accordance with the individual tenant's lease or PHA regulations that adversely affects the individual tenant's rights, duties, welfare, or status.
- B. Complainant: Any tenant (as defined below) whose grievance is presented to the PHA or at the project management office in accordance with the requirements presented in this procedure.
- C. Elements of due process: An eviction action or a termination of tenancy in a state or local court in which the following procedural safeguards are required:
  - i. Adequate notice to the tenant of the grounds for terminating the tenancy and for eviction
  - ii. Right of the tenant to be represented by counsel

- iii. Opportunity for the tenant to refute the evidence presented by the PHA, including the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses and to present any affirmative legal or equitable defense that the tenant may have
  - iv. A decision on the merits of the case
- D. Hearing officer: An impartial person or persons selected by the PHA other than the person who made or approved the decision under review, or a subordinate of that person. Such individuals do not need legal training.
  - E. Tenant: The adult person (or persons other than a live-in aide) who resides in the unit and who executed the lease with the PHA as lessee of the dwelling unit, or if no such person now resides in the unit, who resides in the unit and who is the remaining head of the household of the tenant family residing in the dwelling unit.
  - F. Resident organization: An organization of residents, which also may include a resident management corporation.

## **II. Applicability of this grievance procedure [24 CFR 966.51]**

In accordance with the applicable federal regulations (24 CFR 966.50), this grievance procedure is applicable to all individual grievances (as defined in Section I above) between the tenant and the PHA with the following exception of disputes between tenants not involving the PHA or class grievances. The grievance procedure is not intended as a forum for initiating or negotiating policy changes between a group or groups of tenants and the PHA's Board of Commissioners [24 CFR 966.51(b)].

This grievance procedure is incorporated by reference in all tenant dwelling leases and will be furnished to each tenant and all resident organizations [24 CFR 966.52 (b) and (d)].

Any changes proposed in this grievance procedure must provide for at least 30 days' notice to tenants and resident organizations, setting forth the proposed changes and providing an opportunity to present written comments. Comments will be considered by the PHA before any revisions are made to the grievance procedure [24 CFR 966.52(c)].

## **III. Informal settlement of a grievance [24 CFR 966.54]**

Any grievance must be personally presented, either orally or in writing (including email), to the PHA's central office or the management office of the development in which the complainant resides **within 10 days after the grievable event**.

Grievances related to complaints about operations matters that are received by the PHA's central office will be referred to the person responsible for the management of the development in which the complainant resides. Grievances involving complaints related to discrimination, harassment, or disability rights will be referred to the Civil Rights Administrator or Director of Operations.

As soon as the grievance is received, it will be reviewed by the management office of the development or the Civil Rights Administrator (if applicable) to be certain that neither of the exclusions in paragraphs II.A or II.B above applies to the grievance. Should one of the exclusions apply, the complainant will be notified in writing that the matter raised is not subject to the PHA's grievance procedure with the reason specified.

If neither of the exclusions cited above apply, the complainant will be contacted to arrange a mutually convenient time **within 10 business days** to meet so the grievance may be discussed informally and settled without a hearing. At the informal settlement, the complainant will present the grievance and the person in charge of the management office or the Civil Rights Administrator will attempt to settle the grievance to the satisfaction of both parties.

**Within five business days** following the informal discussion, the PHA will prepare and either hand deliver, mail, or email to the tenant a summary of the discussion that must specify the names of the participants, the dates of meeting, the nature of the proposed disposition of the complaint, and the specific reasons therefore, and will specify the procedures by which a formal hearing under this procedure may be obtained if the complainant is not satisfied. A copy of this summary will also be placed in the tenant's file.

#### IV. Formal grievance hearing

If the complainant is not satisfied with the settlement arrived at in the informal settlement, the complainant must submit a written request for a hearing to the management office of the development where the tenant resides **no later than five business days after the summary of the informal hearing is received.**

The written request must specify:

- The reasons for the grievance; and
- The action of relief sought from the PHA

**Within 10 days of receiving the written request for a hearing,** the hearing officer will schedule and sent written notice of hearing to both the complainant and the PHA.

#### V. Selecting the hearing officer

A grievance hearing will be conducted by a single impartial person appointed by the PHA as described below:

- A. The hearing officer will be appointed directly by the executive director.
- B. The hearing officer will be a staff member who did not make or approve the decision under review and who is not a subordinate of such persons. If the designated staff member (such as the program manager) was involved in the decision or is a subordinate of such person, an alternate hearing officer will be selected.
- C. The PHA may select designated staff members who were not involved in the decision under review in certain circumstances, such as those involving discrimination claims or denials of requests for reasonable accommodations.
- D. The PHA's method for selecting a hearing officer will be inserted into the lease.

#### VI. Scheduling hearings [24 CFR 966.56(a)]

When a complainant submits a timely request for a grievance hearing, the PHA will immediately appoint an impartial hearing office to schedule the hearing within the following 10 business days.

Once the hearing officer has scheduled the hearing, the hearing officer will send written notice of the hearing to both the complainant and the PHA. Notice to the complainant will be in writing, either personally delivered to the complainant, or sent by mail or email, return receipt requested.

The written notice will specify the time, place, and procedures governing the hearing. If the hearing will be held remotely, the PHA will also include information on the remote hearing process.

The tenant may request to reschedule a hearing on a one-time basis. Should the complainant need to reschedule a second time, he or she may do so for good cause, or if needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities. *Good cause* is defined as an unavoidable conflict which seriously affects the health, safety, or welfare of



the family. Requests to reschedule a hearing must be made orally or in writing prior to the hearing date.

## **VII. Procedures governing the hearing [24 CFR 966.56]**

The hearing will be held before a hearing officer as described above in Section V. The complainant will be afforded a fair hearing, which will include:

- A. The opportunity to examine before the hearing any PHA documents, including records and regulations, that are directly relevant to the hearing.

The tenant is allowed to copy any such document at no cost to the tenant. If the PHA does not make the document available for examination upon request by the complainant, the PHA may not rely on such document at the grievance hearing.

- B. The right to be represented by counsel or other person chosen as the tenant's representative and to have such person make statements on the tenant's behalf.
- C. The right to a private hearing unless the complainant requests a public hearing.
- D. The right to present evidence and arguments in support of the tenant's complaint, to refute evidence relied on by the PHA or project management, and to confront and cross-examine all witnesses upon whose testimony or information the PHA or project management relies.
- E. A decision based solely and exclusively upon the fact presented at the hearing [24 CFR 966.56(b)].

The hearing is conducted informally by the hearing officer. The PHA and the tenant must be given the opportunity to present oral or documentary evidence pertinent to the facts and issues raised by the complaint, and to question any witnesses.

The complainant or the PHA may arrange in advance for a transcript of the hearing at the expense of the party making the arrangement. Any interested party may purchase a copy of the transcript [24 CFR 966.56(e)].

The PHA must provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities to participate in the hearing. Reasonable accommodation may include qualified sign language interpreters, readers, accessible locations, or attendants. If the tenant is visually impaired, any notice to the tenant that is required under this procedure must be in an accessible format [24 CFR 966.56(f)].

The PHA must comply with HUD's requirements regarding limited English proficiency as specified in "Final Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons," issued January 22, 2007, and available at:

[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/fair\\_housing\\_equal\\_opp/promotingfh/lep-faq](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/promotingfh/lep-faq).

## **VIII. Remote Hearings**

The PHA has the authority to require that hearings be conducted remotely in certain situations.

## **IX. Failure to appear at the hearing**

If the complainant or PHA fails to appear at the hearing, the hearing officer may make a determination to postpone the hearing or make a determination that the complainant has waived his or her right to a hearing.

Both the complainant and the PHA must be notified of the determination by the hearing officer. A determination that the complainant has waived his or her right to a hearing will not constitute a waiver of any right the complainant may have to contest the PHA's disposition of the grievance in an appropriate judicial setting [24 CFR 966.56(c)].

## **X. Decision of the hearing officer [24 CFR 966.57]**

The hearing officer will prepare a written decision together with the reasons for the decision **within 10 business days** after the hearing. A copy of the decision will be sent to the complainant and the PHA.

The PHA will retain a copy of the decision in the tenant's file.

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 a deadline ordered by the hearing officer, the hearing officer will make a decision based on the evidence presented.

The decision of the hearing officer will be binding on the PHA unless the PHA's Board of Commissioners determines within a reasonable time and notifies the complainant of its determination that:

- A. The grievance does not concern PHA action or failure to act in accordance with or involving the complainant's lease or PHA regulations, which adversely affect the complainant's rights, duties, welfare, or status; or
- B. The decision of the hearing officer is contrary to applicable federal, state, or local law, HUD regulations, or requirements of the annual contributions contract (ACC) between HUD and the PHA.

When the PHA considers the decision of the hearing officer to be invalid due to either of the reasons stated above, it will present the matter to the PHA Board of Commissioners within 10 business days of the date of the hearing officer's decision. The Board has 30 calendar days to consider the decision. If the Board decides to reverse the hearing officer's decision, it must notify the complainant within 10 business days of this decision.

A decision by the hearing officer or Board of Commissioners in favor of the PHA or which denies the relief requested by the complainant in whole or in part will not constitute a waiver of nor affect in any way the rights of the complainant to a trial or judicial review in any court proceedings, which may be brought in the matter later [24 CFR 966.57].

## Chapter 15

### PROGRAM INTEGRITY

#### INTRODUCTION

The PHA is committed to ensuring that funds made available to the PHA are spent in accordance with HUD requirements.

This chapter covers HUD and PHA policies designed to prevent, detect, investigate and resolve instances of program abuse or fraud. It also describes the actions that will be taken in the case of unintentional errors and omissions.

Part I: Preventing, Detecting, and Investigating Errors and Program Abuse. This part presents PHA policies related to preventing, detecting, and investigating errors and program abuse.

Part II: Corrective Measures and Penalties. This part describes the corrective measures the PHA must and may take when errors or program abuses are found.

Part II: Conflict of Interest. This part describes the policies related to conflict of interest in participant files



## **PART I: PREVENTING, DETECTING, AND INVESTIGATING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE**

### **15-I.A. PREVENTING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE**

HUD created the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system to provide PHAs with a powerful tool for preventing errors and program abuse. PHAs are required to use the EIV system in its entirety in accordance with HUD administrative guidance [24 CFR 5.233]. PHAs are further required to:

- Provide applicants and residents with form HUD-52675, “Debts Owed to PHAs and Terminations”
- Require all adult members of an applicant or participant family to acknowledge receipt of form HUD-52675 by signing a copy of the form for retention in the family file

#### PHA Policy

The PHA anticipates that the vast majority of families and PHA employees intend to and will comply with program requirements and make reasonable efforts to avoid errors.

To ensure that the PHA’s program is administered effectively and according to the highest ethical and legal standards, the PHA will employ a variety of techniques to ensure that both errors and intentional program abuse are rare.

The PHA will provide each applicant and resident with a copy of “Is Fraud Worth It?” (form HUD-1141-OIG), which explains the types of actions a family must avoid and the penalties for program abuse.

The PHA will provide each applicant and resident with a copy of “What You Should Know about EIV,” a guide to the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system published by HUD as an attachment to Notice PIH 2017-12. In addition, the PHA will require the head of each household to acknowledge receipt of the guide by signing a copy for retention in the family file.

The PHA will require mandatory orientation sessions for all prospective residents either prior to or upon execution of the lease. The PHA will discuss program compliance and integrity issues. At the conclusion of all program orientation sessions, the family representative will be required to sign a program briefing certificate to confirm that all rules and pertinent regulations were explained to them.

The PHA will routinely provide resident counseling as part of every reexamination interview in order to clarify any confusion pertaining to program rules and requirements.

PHA staff will be required to review and explain the contents of all HUD- and PHA-required forms prior to requesting family member signatures.

The PHA will place a warning statement about the penalties for fraud (as described in 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 1010) on key PHA forms and form letters that request information from a family member.

The PHA will provide each PHA employee with the necessary training on program rules and the organization's standards of conduct and ethics.

At every regular reexamination the PHA staff will explain any changes in HUD regulations or PHA policy that affect residents.

For purposes of this chapter the term *error* refers to an unintentional error or omission. *Program abuse or fraud* refers to a single act or pattern of actions that constitute a false statement, omission, or concealment of a substantial fact, made with the intent to deceive or mislead.

## **15-I.B. DETECTING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE**

In addition to taking steps to prevent errors and program abuse, the PHA will use a variety of activities to detect errors and program abuse.

### **Quality Control and Analysis of Data**

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will employ a variety of methods to detect errors and program abuse, including:

The PHA routinely will use EIV and other non-HUD sources of up-front income verification. This includes the Work Number and any other private or public databases available to the PHA.

At each annual reexamination, current information provided by the family will be compared to information provided at the last annual reexamination to identify inconsistencies and incomplete information.

The PHA will compare family-reported income and expenditures to detect possible unreported income.

### **Independent Audits and HUD Monitoring**

Notice PIH 2015-16 requires all PHAs that expend \$750,000 or more in federal awards annually to have an independent audit (IPA). In addition, HUD conducts periodic on-site and automated monitoring of PHA activities and notifies the PHA of errors and potential cases of program abuse.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will use the results reported in any IPA or HUD monitoring reports to identify potential program abuses as well as to assess the effectiveness of the PHA's error detection and abuse prevention efforts.

### **Individual Reporting of Possible Errors and Program Abuse**

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will encourage staff, residents, and the public to report possible program abuse.



## **15-I.C. INVESTIGATING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE**

### **When the PHA Will Investigate**

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will review all referrals, specific allegations, complaints, and tips from any source including other agencies, companies, and individuals, to determine if they warrant investigation. In order for the PHA to investigate, the allegation must contain at least one independently-verifiable item of information, such as the name of an employer or the name of an unauthorized household member.

The PHA will investigate when inconsistent or contradictory information is detected through file reviews and the verification process.

### **Consent to Release of Information [24 CFR 960.259]**

The PHA may investigate possible instances of error or abuse using all available PHA and public records. If necessary, the PHA will require families to sign consent forms for the release of additional information.

### **Analysis and Findings**

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will base its evaluation on a preponderance of the evidence collected during its investigation.

*Preponderance of the 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 that as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not. Preponderance of evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence.

For each investigation the PHA will determine (1) whether an error or program abuse has occurred, (2) whether any amount of money is owed the PHA, and (3) what corrective measures or penalties will be assessed.

## **Consideration of Remedies**

All errors and instances of program abuse must be corrected prospectively. Whether the PHA will enforce other corrective actions and penalties depends upon the nature of the error or program abuse.

### PHA Policy

In the case of family-caused errors or program abuse, the PHA may take into consideration (1) the seriousness of the offense and the extent of participation or culpability of individual family members, (2) any special circumstances surrounding the case, (3) any mitigating circumstances related to the disability of a family member, (4) the effects of a particular remedy on family members who were not involved in the offense.

## **Notice and Appeals**

### PHA Policy

The PHA will inform the relevant party in writing of its findings and remedies within 10 business days of the conclusion of the investigation. The notice will include (1) a description of the error or program abuse, (2) the basis on which the PHA determined the error or program abuses, (3) the remedies to be employed, and (4) the family's right to appeal the results through an informal hearing or grievance hearing (see Chapter 14).

## **PART II: CORRECTIVE MEASURES AND PENALTIES**

### **15-II.A. UNDER- OR OVERPAYMENT**

An under- or overpayment includes an incorrect tenant rent payment by the family, or an incorrect utility reimbursement to a family.

#### **Corrections**

Whether the incorrect rental determination is an overpayment or underpayment, the PHA must promptly correct the tenant rent and any utility reimbursement prospectively.

##### PHA Policy

Increases in the tenant rent will be implemented on the first of the month following a written 30 day notice.

Any decreases in tenant rent will become effective the first of the month following the discovery of the error. Tenant rent will be refigured from the point of the error.

#### **Reimbursement**

Whether the family is required to reimburse the PHA or the PHA is required to reimburse the family depends upon which party is responsible for the incorrect payment and whether the action taken was an error or program abuse. Policies regarding reimbursement are discussed in the three sections that follow.

## **15-II.B. FAMILY-CAUSED ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE**

General administrative requirements for participating in the program are discussed throughout the ACOP. This section deals specifically with errors and program abuse by family members.

An incorrect rent determination caused by a family generally would be the result of incorrect reporting of family composition, income, assets, or expenses, but also would include instances in which the family knowingly allows the PHA to use incorrect information provided by a third party.

### **Family Reimbursement to PHA**

#### PHA Policy

In the case of family-caused errors or program abuse, the family will be required to repay any amounts of rent underpaid. The PHA may, but is not required to, offer the family a repayment agreement in accordance with Chapter 16. If the family fails to repay the amount owed, the PHA will terminate the family's lease in accordance with the policies in Chapter 13.

### **PHA Reimbursement to Family**

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will not reimburse the family for any overpayment of rent when the overpayment clearly is caused by the family.

## **Prohibited Actions**

An applicant or resident in the public housing program must not knowingly:

- Make a false statement to the PHA [Title 18 U.S.C. Section 1001].
- Provide incomplete or false information to the PHA [24 CFR 960.259(a)(4)].
- Commit fraud, or make false statements in connection with an application for assistance or with reexamination of income [24 CFR 966.4(l)(2)(iii)(C)].

### PHA Policy

Any of the following will be considered evidence of family program abuse:

Offering bribes or illegal gratuities to the PHA Board of Commissioners, employees, contractors, or other PHA representatives

Offering payments or other incentives to a third party as an inducement for the third party to make false or misleading statements to the PHA on the family's behalf

Use of a false name or the use of falsified, forged, or altered documents

Intentional misreporting of family information or circumstances (e.g., misreporting of income or family composition)

Omitted facts that were obviously known by a family member (e.g., not reporting employment income)

Admission of program abuse by an adult family member

The PHA may determine other actions to be program abuse based upon a preponderance of the evidence, as defined earlier in this chapter.

## **Penalties for Program Abuse**

In the case of program abuse caused by a family the PHA may, at its discretion, impose any of the following remedies.

- The PHA may require the family to repay any amounts owed to the program (see 15-II.B., Family Reimbursement to PHA).
- The PHA may require, as a condition of receiving or continuing assistance, that a culpable family member not reside in the unit. See policies in Chapter 3 (for applicants) and Chapter 13 (for residents).
- The PHA may deny admission or terminate the family's lease following the policies set forth in Chapter 3 and Chapter 13 respectively.
- The PHA may refer the family for state or federal criminal prosecution as described in section 15-II.D.

## **15-II.C. PHA-CAUSED ERRORS OR PROGRAM ABUSE**

The responsibilities and expectations of PHA staff with respect to normal program administration are discussed throughout the ACOP. This section specifically addresses actions of a PHA staff member that are considered errors or program abuse related to the public housing program. Additional standards of conduct may be provided in the PHA personnel policy.

PHA-caused incorrect rental determinations include (1) failing to correctly apply public housing rules regarding family composition, income, assets, and expenses, and (2) errors in calculation.

### **Repayment to the PHA**

The family is not required to repay an underpayment of rent if the error or program abuse is caused by PHA staff.

### **PHA Reimbursement to Family**

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will reimburse a family for any PHA caused family overpayment of rent, regardless of whether the overpayment was the result of staff-caused error or staff program abuse.

The PHA will re-imburse the tenant in cases of staff caused error or staff program abuse. The PHA will consider previous calculations up to three years prior to the error being found or (2) the past two annual recertifications of rent, whichever time period is shorter.

### **Prohibited Activities**

#### PHA Policy

Any of the following will be considered evidence of program abuse by PHA staff:

- Failing to comply with any public housing program requirements for personal gain

- Failing to comply with any public housing program requirements as a result of a conflict of interest relationship with any applicant or resident

- Seeking or accepting anything of material value from applicants, residents, vendors, contractors, or other persons who provide services or materials to the PHA

- Disclosing confidential or proprietary information to outside parties

- Gaining profit as a result of insider knowledge of PHA activities, policies, or practices

- Misappropriating or misusing public housing funds

- Destroying, concealing, removing, or inappropriately using any records related to the public housing program

- Committing any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program

## **15-II.D. CRIMINAL PROSECUTION**

### PHA Policy

When the PHA determines that program abuse by a family or PHA staff member has occurred and the amount of underpaid rent meets or exceeds the threshold for prosecution under local or state law, the PHA will refer the matter to the appropriate entity for prosecution. When the amount of underpaid rent meets or exceeds the federal threshold, the case will also be referred to the HUD Office of Inspector General (OIG).

Other criminal violations related to the public housing program will be referred to the appropriate local, state, or federal entity.

## **15-II.E. FRAUD AND PROGRAM ABUSE RECOVERIES**

PHAs who enter into a repayment agreement with a family to collect rent owed, initiate litigation against the family to recover rent owed, or begin eviction proceedings against a family may retain 100 percent of program funds that the PHA recovers [Notice PIH 2007-27 (HA)].

If the PHA does none of the above, all amounts that constitute an underpayment of rent must be returned to HUD.

The family must be afforded the opportunity for a hearing through the PHA's grievance process.



### PART III: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Washington County Community Development Agency (CDA) is adopting this policy to establish procedures when situations of actual or perceived conflict of interest occurs when working with the Public Housing applicant or participant files.

1. **Employee.** The Housing Assistance and Administrative Services Director shall review all federal waiting lists after they have been opened to determine if there is a CDA employee on the list. If a CDA employee is on the waiting list, the employee may not in any way work on the any matter pertaining to his/her file. The Director will notify the employee (and his/her direct supervisor) of this in writing, and identify the employee that is assigned to work on the employee file. The Director shall also monitor the file on a regular basis. The employee is also expected to notify the Housing Assistance Director of his/her application. Should the employee's job duties be assigned to work on the waiting lists, it is required that the employee notify the Housing Assistance Director. Failure to do so may be grounds for dismissal according to the Personnel Policy and/or the Labor Agreement then in force.
2. **Persons related to or known by employee.** If an employee becomes aware of a conflict of interest—such as when entering the applications to the waiting lists or working on case files that are from relatives, friends, neighbors or other persons closely related or known to the employee—the employee must immediately notify the Housing Assistance Director in writing of this conflict of interest. The Housing Assistance Director shall then undertake the procedures in item #1. Failure to notify the Housing Assistance Director may be grounds for dismissal according to the Personnel Policy and/or the Labor Agreement then in force.
  - a. If the applicant has been already entered into the waiting list before the employee notifies the supervisor, the supervisor will analyze the placement and if the placement is correct, the supervisor will attach an electronic note to the computer file stating that the employee entered the application but that the applicant is in the right place on the list. A copy of the electronic note will be maintained in the paper file.
  - b. If the employee has begun working on a participant case file before realizing that there may be a conflict of interest, the employee must immediately notify the Housing Assistance Director in writing. The Housing Assistance Director will review the calculations in the file to make sure they are correct. The participant case file will then be re-assigned to another employee. The Housing Assistance Director will make a note to the electronic file stating that a conflict of interest has been noted and the file has been assigned to another worker. A copy of the electronic note will be maintained in the paper file.
  - c. After notification to the Housing Assistance Director, the employee will no longer access the applicant/participant's electronic file. All updates to the electronic file will be handled by the Housing Assistance Director in the case

of applicants and handled by the assigned worker in participant cases. The employee may not amend the applicant/participant's file in any manner.

- d. If the electronic file reveals tampering by an employee, the direct supervisor must document if there is a violation of the conflict of interest policy. This shall be grounds for dismissal according to the policy and procedures in the Personnel Policy and/or the Labor Agreement then in force.

### 3. **Undue Employee Pressure.**

- a. If an employee perceives pressure from other employees regarding placement of an applicant on the waiting list or to provide a more favorable outcome to an applicant/participant than is warranted, the employee must notify his/her direct supervisor in writing. The supervisor will initiate an investigation of the situation and determine if there is a violation of the Conflict of Interest Policy and whether discipline is warranted or dismissal.
- b. If the employee perceives aforementioned pressure from the direct supervisor then the employee is directed to notify the Executive Director in writing. The Executive Director will initiate an investigation of the situation and determine if there is a violation of the Conflict of Interest Policy and whether discipline is warranted or dismissal.
- c. If the employee perceives aforementioned pressure from the Executive Director, then the employee must notify his/her direct supervisor in writing. The direct supervisor in this matter should report directly to the Chair of the CDA Board that a potential conflict of interest has been reported. The direct supervisor will initiate an investigation, with the advice and counsel of the CDA legal counsel, and provide the findings to the Chair of the CDA Board. The Chair of the CDA Board will contact the remaining members of the Board to discuss the process to review the matter with the Executive Director.

## Chapter 16

### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses administrative policies and practices that are relevant to the activities covered in this ACOP. The policies are discussed in seven parts as described below:

Part I: Setting Utility Allowances. This part describes how utility allowances are established and revised. Also discussed are the requirements to establish surcharges for excess consumption of PHA-furnished utilities.

Part II: Establishing Flat Rents. This part describes the requirements and policies related to establishing and updating flat rent amounts.

Part III: Repayment of Family Debts. This part contains policies for recovery of monies that have been underpaid by families, and describes the circumstances under which the PHA will offer repayment agreements to families. Also discussed are the consequences for failure to make payments in accordance with a repayment agreement.

Part IV: Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS). This part describes the PHAS indicators, how PHAs are scored under PHAS, and how those scores affect a PHA.

Part V: Record Keeping. All aspects of the program involve certain types of record-keeping. This part outlines the privacy rights of applicants and participants and record retention policies the PHA will follow.

Part VI: Reporting and Record Keeping for Children with Elevated Blood Lead Level. This part describes the PHA's reporting responsibilities related to children with elevated blood lead levels that are living in public housing.

Part VII: Violence against Women Act (VAWA): Notification, Documentation, and Confidentiality. This part contains key terms used in VAWA and describes requirements related to notifying families about their rights and responsibilities under VAWA; requesting documentation from victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking; and maintaining the confidentiality of information obtained from victims.



## **PART I: SETTING UTILITY ALLOWANCES [24 CFR 965 Subpart E]**

### **16-I.A. OVERVIEW**

PHAs must establish allowances for PHA-furnished utilities for all check metered utilities and for resident-purchased utilities for all utilities purchased directly by residents from a utility supplier [24 CFR 965.502(a)].

PHAs must also establish surcharges for excess consumption of PHA-furnished utilities [24 CFR 965.506].

The PHA must maintain a record that documents the basis on which utility allowances and scheduled surcharges are established and revised, and the record must be made available for inspection by residents [24 CFR 965.502(b)].

### **16-I.B UTILITY ALLOWANCES**

The PHA must establish separate allowances for each utility and for each category of dwelling units the PHA determines to be reasonably comparable as to factors affecting utility usage [24 CFR 965.503].

The objective of a PHA in establishing utility allowances for each dwelling unit category and unit size is to approximate a reasonable consumption of utilities by an energy-conservative household of modest circumstances consistent with the requirements of a safe, sanitary, and healthful living environment [24 CFR 965.505].

Utilities include gas, electricity, fuel for heating, water, sewerage, and solid waste disposal for a dwelling unit. In addition, if the PHA does not furnish a range and refrigerator, the family must be granted a utility allowance for the range and refrigerator they provide [24 CFR 965.505].

Costs for telephone, cable/satellite TV, and internet services are not considered utilities [PH Occ GB, p. 138].

Utility allowance amounts will vary by the rates in effect, size and type of unit, climatic location and sitting of the unit, type of construction, energy efficiency of the dwelling unit, and other factors related to the physical condition of the unit. Utility allowance amounts will also vary by residential demographic characteristics affecting home energy usage [PH Occ GB, p. 138].

Chapter 14 of the *PH Occupancy Guidebook* provides detailed guidance to the PHA about establishing utility allowances.

## **Air-Conditioning**

“If a PHA installs air conditioning, it shall provide, to the maximum extent economically feasible, systems that give residents the option of choosing to use air conditioning in their units. The design of systems that offer each resident the option to choose air conditioning shall include retail meters or check meters, and residents shall pay for the energy used in its operation. For systems that offer residents the option to choose air conditioning but cannot be check metered, residents are to be surcharged in accordance with 965.506. If an air conditioning system does not provide for resident option, residents are not to be charged, and these systems should be avoided whenever possible.” [24 CFR 965.505(e)]

### **PHA Policy**

Residents have the option to not to use air conditioning.

## **Utility Allowance Revisions [24 CFR 965.507]**

The PHA must review at least annually the basis on which utility allowances have been established and must revise the allowances if necessary in order to adhere to the standards for establishing utility allowances that are contained in 24 CFR 965.505.

The PHA may revise its allowances for resident-purchased utilities between annual reviews if there is a rate change, and is required to do so if such change, by itself or together with prior rate changes not adjusted for, results in a change of 10 percent or more from the rate on which the allowance was based.

Adjustments to resident payments as a result of such changes must be retroactive to the first day of the month following the month in which the last rate change taken into account became effective.

### **PHA Policy**

Between annual reviews of utility allowances, the PHA will only revise its utility allowances due to a rate change, when required to by the regulation.

#### **16-I.C. SURCHARGES FOR PHA-FURNISHED UTILITIES [24 CFR 965.506]**

For dwelling units subject to allowances for PHA-furnished utilities where check meters have been installed, the PHA must establish surcharges for utility consumption in excess of the allowances. Surcharges may be computed on a straight per unit of purchase basis or for stated blocks of excess consumption, and must be based on the PHA's average utility rate. The basis for calculating the surcharges must be described in the PHA's schedule of allowances. Changes in the amount of surcharges based directly on changes in the PHA's average utility rate are not subject to the advance notice requirements discussed under 16-I.D.

For dwelling units served by PHA-furnished utilities where check meters have not been installed, the PHA must establish schedules of surcharges indicating additional dollar amounts residents will be required to pay by reason of estimated utility consumption attributable to resident-owned major appliances or to optional functions of PHA-furnished equipment. The surcharge schedule must state the resident-owned equipment (or functions of PHA-furnished equipment) for which surcharges will be made and the amounts of such charges. Surcharges must be based on the cost to the PHA of the utility consumption estimated to be attributable to reasonable usage of such equipment.

##### PHA Policy

Depending upon the unit, the PHA may have PHA-furnished utilities. Depending upon the unit, the tenant may have to pay additional garbage costs if the development association bills the PHA. If the tenant does not pay the water bill or uses excess water and the amount becomes attached or will be attached to the PHA's property tax, or the development association bills the PHA, the tenant would be responsible for that cost. The tenant is required to pay these costs within 30 days of the notification. Failure to pay these costs is considered a violation of the lease and will result in termination of the tenancy.

#### **16-I.D. NOTICE REQUIREMENTS [965.502]**

The PHA must give notice to all residents of proposed allowances and scheduled surcharges, and revisions thereof. The notice must be given in the manner provided in the lease and must:

- Be provided at least 60 days before the proposed effective date of the allowances, scheduled surcharges, or revisions.
- Describe the basis for determination of the allowances, scheduled surcharges, or revisions, including a statement of the specific items of equipment and function whose utility consumption requirements were included in determining the amounts of the allowances and schedule of surcharges.
- Notify residents of the place where the PHA's documentation on which allowances and surcharges are based is available for inspection.

- Provide all residents an opportunity to submit written comments during a period expiring not less than 30 days before the proposed effective date of the allowances, scheduled surcharges, or revisions.



#### **16-I.E. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION [24 CFR 965.508]**

On request from a family that includes a disabled or elderly person, the PHA must approve a utility allowance that is higher than the applicable amount for the dwelling unit if a higher utility allowance is needed as a reasonable accommodation to make the program accessible to and usable by the family [PH Occ GB, p. 172].

Likewise, residents with disabilities may not be charged for the use of certain resident-supplied appliances if there is a verified need for special equipment because of the disability [PH Occ GB, p. 172].

See Chapter 2 for policies regarding the request and approval of reasonable accommodations.

## **PART II: ESTABLISHING FLAT RENTS AND PUBLIC HOUSING MAXIMUM RENTS**

### **16-II.A. OVERVIEW**

Flat rents are designed to encourage self-sufficiency and to avoid creating disincentives for continued residency by families who are attempting to become economically self-sufficient.

Flat rents are also used to prorate assistance for a mixed family. A mixed family is one whose members include those with citizenship or eligible immigration status, and those without citizenship or eligible immigration status [24 CFR 5.504].

This part discusses how the PHA establishes and updates flat rents. Policies related to the use of flat rents, family choice of rent, flat rent hardships, and proration of rent for a mixed family are discussed in Chapter 6.

### **16-II.B. FLAT RENTS [24 CFR 960.253(b) and Notice PIH 2017-23]**

#### **Establishing Flat Rents**

The 2015 Appropriations Act requires that flat rents must be set at no less than 80 percent of the applicable fair market rent (FMR). Alternatively, the PHA may set flat rents at no less than 80 percent of the applicable small area FMARs (SAFMR) for metropolitan areas, or 80 percent of applicable unadjusted rents for nonmetropolitan areas.

For areas where HUD has not determined a SAFMR or an unadjusted rent, PHAs must set flat rents at no less than 80 percent of the FMR or apply for an exception flat rent.

The 2015 Appropriations Act permits PHAs to request an exception flat rent that is lower than either 80 percent of the FMR or SAFMR/unadjusted rent if the PHA can demonstrate that these FMRs do not reflect the market value of a particular property or unit.

In order to demonstrate the need for an exception flat rent, PHAs are required to submit a market analysis methodology that demonstrates the value of the unit. The PHA must use HUD's rent reasonableness methodology to determine flat rents. In determining flat rents, PHA's must consider the following:

:

- Location
- Quality
- Unit size
- Unit type
- Age of the unit
- Amenities at the property and in immediate neighborhood

- Housing services provided
- Maintenance provided by the PHA
- Utilities provided by the PHA and/or landlord (for comparable units in the market study)
- The PHA must provide a corresponding key explaining the calculation used for determining the valuation for each factor.

PHAS must receive HUD approval before implementing exception flat rents. PHAs with a previously approved flat rent exception request, may submit a written request to extend the approved flat rents up to two additional years, provided the local market conditions remain unchanged. Detailed information on how to request exception flat rents can be found in Notice PIH 2017-23.

PHAs are now required to apply a utility allowance to flat rents as necessary. Flat rents set at 80 percent of the FMR must be reduced by the amount of the unit's utility allowance if any.

### **Review of Flat Rents**

No later than 90 days after the effective date of the new annual FMRs, SAFMRs/unadjusted rent, PHAs must implement new flat rents as necessary based on changes to the FMR/SAFMR/unadjusted rent or request an exception.

If the FMR falls from year to year, the PHA may, but is not required to, lower the flat rent to 80 percent of the current FMR/SAFMR/unadjusted rent.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will review flat rents on an annual basis, and adjust them as necessary to ensure that flat rents continue to mirror market rent values. The flat rents at minimum will be 80% of the Fair Market Rent for that bedroom size. **Posting of Flat Rents**

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will publicly post the schedule of flat rents in a conspicuous manner in the PHA or project office.

### **Documentation of Flat Rents [24 CFR 960.253(b)(5)]**

The PHA must maintain records that document the method used to determine flat rents, and that show how flat rents were determined by the PHA in accordance with this method.



## **PART III: FAMILY DEBTS TO THE PHA**

### **16-III.A. OVERVIEW**

This part describes the PHA's policies for recovery of monies owed to the PHA by families.

#### PHA Policy

When an action or inaction of a resident family results in the underpayment of rent or other amounts, the PHA holds the family liable to return any underpayments to the PHA.

The PHA will enter into repayment agreements in accordance with the policies contained in this part as a means to recover overpayments.

When a family refuses to repay monies owed to the PHA, the PHA will utilize other available collection alternatives including, but not limited to, the following:

- Collection agencies

- Small claims court

- Civil law suit

- State income or property tax revenue recapture

## **16-III.B. REPAYMENT POLICY**

### **Family Debts to the PHA**

#### PHA Policy

Any amount owed to the PHA by a public housing family must be repaid. Any family that leaves public housing owing monies to the PHA will be reported to HUD.

The family will be required to pay for damages to the unit or for utilities billed to the PHA. The family must pay these charges within 30 days of receiving notification from the PHA. Failure to pay these charges is a violation of the lease and will result in a termination of the tenancy.

The family will be required to repay any retroactive rent due within 30 days of notification. If the family is unable to repay the debt within 30 days, the PHA may enter into a repayment agreement in accordance with the policies below.

If the family refuses to repay the debt, does not enter into a repayment agreement, or breaches a repayment agreement, the PHA will terminate the family's tenancy in accordance with the policies in Chapter 13. The PHA will also pursue other modes of collection. If the family owes an amount which equals or exceeds \$2500 as a result of program fraud, the PHA will notify the Office of Inspector General. Where appropriate the PHA will refer the case for criminal prosecution.

The duration of the repayment agreement due to retroactive rent may extend up to eighteen (18) months. The PHA may, in its sole discretion, provide for a longer duration of the repayment agreement. The PHA may take into consideration the tenant's rental history with the PHA when making this determination.

No unit transfer requests will be granted during the repayment agreement.

### **General Repayment Agreement Guidelines**

#### ***Down Payment Requirement***

#### PHA Policy

Before executing a repayment agreement with a family, the PHA will generally require a down payment of 20 percent of the total amount owed. If the family can provide evidence satisfactory to the PHA that a down payment of 20 percent would impose an undue hardship, the PHA may, in its sole discretion, require a lesser percentage or waive the requirement.

#### ***Payment Thresholds***

Notice PIH 2017-12 recommends that the total amount that a family must pay each month—the family's monthly share of rent plus the monthly debt repayment amount—should not exceed 40 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income, which is considered "affordable." Moreover, Notice PIH 2017-12 acknowledges that PHAs have the discretion to establish "thresholds and policies" for repayment agreements with families [24 CFR 982.552(c)(1)(vii)].

### PHA Policy

If a family is paying less than 40 percent of its monthly adjusted income (MAI) in rent, the minimum monthly payment amount will be the greater of the following two amounts:

The difference between 40 percent of the family's MAI and the total family share at the time the agreement is executed; or

\$100

If a family can provide evidence satisfactory to the PHA that a monthly payment amount of \$100 would impose an undue hardship, the PHA may, in its sole discretion, require a lower monthly payment amount.

If the family's income increases or decreases during the term of a repayment agreement, either the PHA or the family may request that the monthly payment amount be adjusted accordingly.

### ***Execution of the Agreement***

#### **PHA Policy**

Any repayment agreement between the PHA and a family must be signed and dated by the PHA and by the head of household and spouse/co-head (if applicable).

### ***Due Dates***

#### **PHA Policy**

All payments are due by the close of business on the 5th day of the month. If the 5th does not fall on a business day, the due date is the close of business on the first business day after the 5th.

### ***Late or Missed Payments***

#### **PHA Policy**

If a payment is not received by the end of the business day on the date due, and prior approval for the missed payment has not been given by the PHA, the PHA will consider the repayment agreement to be in default and the total amount will be due immediately. Failure to pay the full amount due is a violation of the lease and will result in termination of the tenancy in accordance with the policies in Chapter 13.

### ***No Offer of Repayment Agreement***

#### **PHA Policy**

The PHA may, in its sole discretion, consider whether to enter a repayment agreement for rent. The PHA may choose not to enter into a repayment agreement with a family if:

- 1) There is already a repayment agreement in place with the family;
- 2) If the amount owed by the family exceeds \$2500;
- 3) If the PHA determines the family has committed program fraud, failed to fully cooperate, or provided misleading information;
- 4) If the PHA determines that the debt is too large to repay in eighteen months.

In making this determination the PHA may take into account the family's previous tenant history with the PHA.

The PHA may offer no more than one repayment agreement during a tenancy. The PHA may, in its sole discretion, provide another repayment agreement if the time between occurrences exceeds two years.

### **Repayment Agreements Involving Improper Payments**

Notice PIH 2017-12 requires certain provisions to be included in any repayment agreement involving amounts owed by a family because it underreported or failed to report income:



- A reference to the items in the public housing lease that state the family's obligation to provide true and complete information at every reexamination and the grounds on which the PHA may terminate assistance because of a family's action or failure to act
- A statement clarifying that each month the family not only must pay to the PHA the monthly payment amount specified in the agreement but must also pay to the PHA the family's monthly tenant rent
- A statement that the terms of the repayment agreement may be renegotiated if the family's income decreases or increases
- A statement that late or missed payments constitute default of the repayment agreement and may result in termination of tenancy



## **PART IV: PUBLIC HOUSING ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (PHAS)**

### **16-IV.A. OVERVIEW**

The purpose of the Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) is to improve the delivery of services in public housing and enhance trust in the public housing system among PHAs, public housing residents, HUD and the general public by providing a management tool for effectively and fairly measuring the performance of a public housing agency in essential housing operations.

### **16-IV.B. PHAS INDICATORS [24 CFR 902 Subparts A, B, C, D, and E]**

The table below lists each of the PHAS indicators, the points possible under each indicator, and a brief description of each indicator. A PHA's performance is based on a combination of all four indicators.

<b>Indicator 1: Physical condition of the PHA's projects</b>
<b>Maximum Score: 40</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The objective of this indicator is to determine the level to which a PHA is maintaining its public housing in accordance with the standard of decent, safe, sanitary, and in good repair.</li><li>• To determine the physical condition of a PHA's projects, inspections are performed of the following five major areas of each public housing project: site, building exterior, building systems, dwelling units, and common areas. The inspections are performed by an independent inspector arranged by HUD, and include a statistically valid sample of the units in each project in the PHA's public housing portfolio.</li></ul>
<b>Indicator 2: Financial condition of the PHA's projects</b>
<b>Maximum Score: 25</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The objective of this indicator is to measure the financial condition of the PHA's public housing projects for the purpose of evaluating whether the PHA has sufficient financial resources and is capable of managing those financial resources effectively to support the provision of housing that is decent, safe, sanitary, and in good repair.</li><li>• A PHA's financial condition is determined by measuring each public housing project's performance in each of the following subindicators: quick ratio, months expendable net assets ratio, and debt service coverage ratio.</li></ul>

**Indicator 3: Management operations of the PHA's projects****Maximum Score: 25**

- The objective of this indicator is to measure certain key management operations and responsibilities of a PHA's projects for the purpose of assessing the PHA's management operations capabilities.
- Each project's management operations are assessed based on the following sub-indicators: occupancy, tenant accounts receivable, and accounts payable.
- An on-site management review may be conducted as a diagnostic and feedback tool for problem performance areas, and for compliance. Management reviews are not scored.

**Indicator 4: Capital Fund****Maximum Score: 10**

- The objective of this indicator is to measure how long it takes the PHA to obligate capital funds and to occupy units.
- The PHA's score for this indicator is measured at the PHA level and is based on the following subindicators: timeliness of fund obligation and occupancy rate.

#### **16-IV.C. PHAS SCORING [24 CFR 902 Subpart F]**

HUD's Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) issues overall PHAS scores, which are based on the scores of the four PHAS indicators, and the subindicators under each indicator. The PHA's indicator scores are based on a weighted average of the PHA's public housing projects' scores. PHAS scores translate into a designation for each PHA as high performing, standard, substandard, or troubled.

A high performer is a PHA that achieves an overall PHAS score of 90 or greater, and achieves a score of at least 60 percent of the points available under the physical, financial, and management indicators and at least 50 percent of the points available under the capital fund indicator.

A standard performer is a PHA that has an overall PHAS score between 60 and 89, and achieves a score of at least 60 percent of the points available under the physical, financial, and management indicators and at least 50 percent of the points available under the capital fund indicator.

A substandard performer is a PHA that has an overall PHAS score of at least 60 percent and achieves a score of less than 60 percent under one or more of the physical, financial, or management indicators.

A troubled performer is a PHA that achieves an overall PHAS score of less than 60, or achieves less than 50 percent of the total points available under the capital fund indicator.

These designations can affect a PHA in several ways:

- High-performing PHAs are eligible for incentives including relief from specific HUD requirements and bonus points in funding competitions [24 CFR 902.71].
- PHAs that are standard performers may be required to submit and operate under a corrective action plan to eliminate deficiencies in the PHA's performance [24 CFR 902.73(a)(1)].
- PHAs that are substandard performers will be required to submit and operate under a corrective action plan to eliminate deficiencies in the PHA's performance [24 CFR 902.73(a)(2)].
- PHAs with an overall rating of "troubled" are subject to additional HUD oversight, and are required to enter into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with HUD to improve PHA performance [24 CFR 902.75].
- PHAs that fail to execute or meet MOA requirements may be referred to the Assistant Secretary to determine remedial actions, including, but not limited to, remedies available for substantial default [24 CFR 902.75(g) and 24 CFR Part 907].

PHAs must post a notice of its final PHAS score and status in appropriate conspicuous and accessible locations in its offices within two weeks of receipt of its final score and designation [24 CFR 902.64(b)(2)].



## **PART V: RECORD KEEPING**

### **16-V.A. OVERVIEW**

The PHA must maintain complete and accurate accounts and other records for the program in accordance with HUD requirements, in a manner that permits a speedy and effective audit. All such records must be made available to HUD or the Comptroller General of the United States upon request.

In addition, the PHA must ensure that all applicant and participant files are maintained in a way that protects an individual's privacy rights and comply with VAWA 2013 confidentiality requirements.

### **16-V.B. RECORD RETENTION**

The PHA must keep the last three years of the Form HUD-50058 and supporting documentation during the term of each assisted lease, and for a period of at least three years from the end of participation (EOP) date [24 CFR 908.101].

Notice PIH 2014-20 requires the PHA to keep records of all complaints, investigations, notices, and corrective actions related to violations of the Fair Housing Act or the equal access final rule.

- The PHA must keep confidential records of all emergency transfers requested under the PHA's Emergency Transfer Plan, and the outcomes of such requests, and retain the records for a period of three years, or a period of time as specific in program regulations [24 CFR 5.2002(e)(12)].

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will keep the last three years of the Form HUD 50058 and supporting documentation, and for at least three years after the end of participation all documents related to the family's eligibility, tenancy, and termination.

In addition, the PHA will keep the following records for at least three years:

An application from each ineligible family and notice that the applicant is not eligible

Lead-based paint records as required by 24 CFR 35, Subpart B

Documentation supporting the establishment of flat rents

Documentation supporting the establishment of utility allowances and surcharges

Documentation related to PHAS

Accounts and other records supporting PHA budget and financial statements for the program

Complaints, investigations, notices, and corrective actions related to violations of the Fair Housing Act or the equal access final rule

Confidential records of all emergency transfers related to VAWA requested under the PHA's Emergency Transfer Plan and the outcomes of such requests.

Other records as determined by the PHA or as required by HUD

If a hearing to establish a family's citizenship status is held, longer retention requirements apply for some types of documents. For specific requirements, see Section 14-II.A.



## **16-V.C. RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

PHAs must maintain applicant and participant files and information in accordance with the regulatory requirements described below.

### **PHA Policy**

All applicant and participant information will be kept in a secure location and access will be limited to authorized PHA staff.

PHA staff will not discuss personal family information 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.

### **Privacy Act Requirements [24 CFR 5.212 and Form-9886]**

The collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of social security numbers (SSN), employer identification numbers (EIN), any information derived from these numbers, and income information of applicants and participants must be conducted, to the extent applicable, in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974, and all other provisions of Federal, State, and local law.

Applicants and participants, including all adults in the household, are required to sign a consent form, HUD-9886, Authorization for Release of Information. This form incorporates the Federal Privacy Act Statement and describes how the information collected using the form may be used, and under what conditions HUD or the PHA may release the information collected.

### **Upfront Income Verification (UIV) Records**

PHAs that access UIV data through HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System are required to adopt and follow specific security procedures to ensure that all EIV data is protected in accordance with federal laws, regardless of the media on which the data is recorded (e.g. electronic, paper). These requirements are contained in the HUD issued document, *Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System, Security Procedures for Upfront Income Verification (UIV) Data*.

### **PHA Policy**

Before using HUD's EIV system, the PHA will adopt and implement EIV security procedures required by HUD.

## **Criminal Records**

The PHA may only disclose the criminal conviction records which the PHA receives from a law enforcement agency to officers or employees of the PHA, or to authorized representatives of the PHA who have a job-related need to have access to the information [24 CFR 5.903(e)].

The PHA must establish and implement a system of records management that ensures that any criminal record received by the PHA from a law enforcement agency is maintained confidentially, not misused or improperly disseminated, and destroyed, once the purpose for which the record was requested has been accomplished, including expiration of the period for filing a challenge to the PHA action without institution of a challenge or final disposition of any such litigation [24 CFR 5.903(g)].

The PHA must establish and implement a system of records management that ensures that any sex offender registration information received by the PHA from a State or local agency is maintained confidentially, not misused or improperly disseminated, and destroyed, once the purpose for which the record was requested has been accomplished, including expiration of the period for filing a challenge to the PHA action without institution of a challenge or final disposition of any such litigation. However, a record of the screening, including the type of screening and the date performed must be retained [Notice PIH 2012-28]. This requirement does not apply to information that is public information, or is obtained by a PHA other than under 24 CFR 5.905.

## **Medical/Disability Records**

PHAs are not permitted to inquire about the nature or extent of a person's disability. The PHA may not inquire about a person's diagnosis or details of treatment for a disability or medical condition. If the PHA receives a verification document that provides such information, the PHA should not place this information in the tenant file. The PHA should destroy the document.

## **Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking Records**

For requirements and PHA policies related to management of documentation obtained from victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, see section 16-VII.E.



## **PART VI: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH ELEVATED BLOOD LEAD LEVEL**

### **16-VI.A. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 35.1130(e); Notice PI 2017-13]**

The PHA has certain responsibilities relative to children with elevated blood lead levels that are living in public housing.

The PHA must report the name and address of a child identified as having an elevated blood lead level (EBLL) to the public health department within five (5) business days of being so notified by any other medical health care professional. The PHA must also report each known case of a child with an elevated blood lead level to the HUD field office.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will provide the public health department written notice of the name and address of any child identified as having an elevated blood lead level.

The PHA will provide written notice of each known case of a child with an EBLL to the HUD field office, and to HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control (OLHCHH0 within five business days of receiving the information.



## **PART VII: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA): NOTIFICATION, DOCUMENTATION, AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

### **16-VII.A. OVERVIEW**

The Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA) provides special protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking who are applying for or receiving assistance under the public housing program. If your state or local laws provide greater protection for such victims, those apply in conjunction with VAWA.

In addition to definitions of key terms used in VAWA, this part contains general VAWA requirements and PHA policies in three areas: notification, documentation, and confidentiality. Specific VAWA requirements and PHA policies are located in Chapter 3, “Eligibility” (sections 3-I.C and 3-III.F); Chapter 5, “Occupancy Standards and Unit Offers” (section 5-II.D); Chapter 8, “Leasing and Inspections” (section 8-I.B); Chapter 12, “Transfer Policy” (sections 12-III.C, 12-III.F, and 12-IV.D); and Chapter 13, “Lease Terminations” (sections 13-III.F and 13-IV.D).

### **16-VII.B. DEFINITIONS [24 CFR 5.2003, FR Notice 8/6/13]**

As used in VAWA:

- The term *affiliated individual* means, with respect to a person:
  - A spouse, parent, brother, sister, or child of that individual, or an individual to whom that person stands in the position or place of a parent; or
  - Any individual, tenant or lawful occupant living in the household of the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
- The term *bifurcate* means, with respect to a public housing or Section 8 lease, to divide a lease as a matter of law such that certain tenants can be evicted or removed while the remaining family members’ lease and occupancy rights are allowed to remain intact.
- The term *dating violence* means violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:
  - The length of the relationship
  - The type of relationship
  - The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship
- The term *domestic violence* includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person’s acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction.
-

- The term *sexual assault* means:  
Any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by Federal, tribal, or State law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent.
- The term *stalking* means:
  - To engage in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety or the safety of others, or suffer substantial emotional distress.

## **16-VII.C. NOTIFICATION [24 CFR 5.2005(a)]**

### **Notification to Public**

The PHA adopts the following policy to help ensure that all actual and potential beneficiaries of its public housing program are aware of their rights under VAWA.

#### PHA Policy

The PHA will post the following information regarding VAWA in its offices and on its Web site. It will also make the information readily available to anyone who requests it.

A notice of occupancy rights under VAWA to Public Housing program applicants and participants who are or have been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking (Form HUD-5380, see Exhibit 16-1)

A copy of form HUD-5382, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking and Alternate Documentation (see Exhibit 16-2)

A copy of the PHA's emergency transfer f=plan (Exhibit 16-3)

A copy of HUD's Emergency Transfer Request for Certain Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or stalking, Form HUD-5383 (Exhibit 16-4).

The National Domestic Violence Hot Line: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY) (included in Exhibit 16-1)

Contact information for local victim advocacy groups or service providers

## **Notification to Applicants and Tenants [24 CFR 5.2005(a)(1)]**

PHAs are required to inform public housing applicants and tenants of their rights under VAWA, including their right to confidentiality and the limits thereof, when they are denied assistance, when they are admitted to the program, and when they are notified of an eviction or termination of housing benefits.

The PHA must distribute a notice of VAWA rights, along with the VAWA Self-Certification form (HUD-50066) at each of three junctures

### PHA Policy

The VAWA information provided to applicants and participants will consist of the notices in Exhibit 16-1 and 16-2.

The PHA will provide all applicants with information about VAWA at the time they request an application for housing assistance. The PHA will also include such information in all notices of denial of assistance (see section 3-III.F).

The PHA will provide all tenants with information about VAWA at the time of admission (see section 8-I.B) and at annual reexamination. The PHA will also include such information in all lease termination notices (see section 13-IV.D).

The PHA is not limited to providing VAWA information at the times specified in the above policy. If the PHA decides to provide VAWA information to a tenant following an incident of domestic violence, Notice PIH 2006-42 cautions against sending the information by mail, since the abuser may be monitoring the mail. The notice recommends that in such cases the PHA make alternative delivery arrangements that will not put the victim at risk.

### PHA Policy

Whenever the PHA has reason to suspect that providing information about VAWA to a public housing tenant might place a victim of domestic violence at risk, it will attempt to deliver the information by hand directly to the victim or by having the victim come to an office or other space that may be safer for the individual, making reasonable accommodations as necessary. For example, the PHA may decide not to send mail regarding VAWA protections to the victim's unit if the PHA believes the perpetrator may have access to the victim's mail, unless requested by the victim.

When discussing VAWA with the victim, the PHA will take reasonable precautions to ensure that no one can overhear the conversation. Conversations will take place in a private room.

The victim may, but is not required to, designate an attorney, advocate, or other secure contact for communications regarding VAWA protections.



## **16-VII.D. DOCUMENTATION [24 CFR 5.2007]**

A PHA presented with a claim for initial or continued assistance based on status as a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, sexual assault or criminal activity related to any of these forms of abuse may—but is not required to—request that the individual making the claim document the abuse. Any request for documentation must be in writing, and the individual must be allowed at least 14 business days after receipt of the request to submit the documentation. The PHA may extend this time period at its discretion. [24 CFR 5.2007(a)]

The individual may satisfy the PHA's request by providing any one of the following three forms of documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(b)]:

- (1) A completed and signed HUD-approved certification form (HUD-5382, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking), which must include the name of the perpetrator only if the name of the perpetrator is safe to provide and is known to the victim. The form may be filled out and submitted on behalf of the victim.
- (2) A federal, state, tribal, territorial, or local police report or court record, or an administrative record.
- (3) Documentation signed by a person who has assisted the victim in addressing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, or the effects of such abuse. This person may be an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider; an attorney; a mental health professional; or a medical professional. The person signing the documentation must attest under penalty of perjury to the person's belief that the incidents in question are bona fide incidents of abuse. The victim must also sign the documentation.

The PHA may not require third-party documentation (forms 2 and 3) in addition to certification (form 1), except as specified below under "Conflicting Documentation," nor may it require certification in addition to third-party documentation [VAWA 2005 final rule].

### PHA Policy

Any request for documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking will be in writing, will specify a deadline of 14 business days following receipt of the request, will describe the three forms of acceptable documentation, will provide explicit instructions on where and to whom the documentation must be submitted, and will state the consequences for failure to submit the documentation or request an extension in writing by the deadline.

- (4) A completed and signed HUD-approved certification form (HUD-5382, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking), which must include the name of the perpetrator only if the name of the perpetrator is safe to provide and is known to the victim. The form may be filled out and submitted on behalf of the victim.

## **Conflicting Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(e)]**

In cases where the PHA receives conflicting certification documents from two or more members of a household, each claiming to be a victim and naming one or more of the other petitioning household members as the perpetrator, the PHA may determine which is the true victim by requiring each to provide acceptable third-party documentation, as described above (forms 2 and

3). The PHA may also request third-party documentation when submitted documentation contains information that conflicts with existing information already available to the PHA. The PHA must honor any court orders issued to protect the victim or to address the distribution of property. Individuals have 30 calendar days to return third-party verification to the PHA. If the PHA does not receive third-party documentation supporting the tenant's claim and the PHA will deny or terminate assistance as a result, the PHA must hold a separate hearings for the tenants [Notice PIH 2017-08].

#### PHA Policy

If presented with conflicting certification documents (two or more forms HUD-5382) from members of the same household, the PHA will attempt to determine which is the true victim by requiring each of them to provide third-party documentation in accordance with 24 CFR 5.2007 and by following any HUD guidance on how such determinations should be made. When requesting third-party documents, the PHA will provide contact information for local domestic violence and legal aid offices. In such cases, applicants and tenants will be given 30 calendar days from the date of the PHA's request to provide such documentation.

If the PHA does not receive third-party documentation that supports the tenant or applicant's claim within the required timeframe (and any extensions provided by the PHA) the PHA will deny VAWA protections and will notify the applicant or tenant in writing of the denial. If, as a result, the applicant or tenant is denied or terminated from the program, the PHA will hold separate hearings for the applicants or tenants.

#### **Discretion to Require No Formal Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(d)]**

The PHA has the discretion to provide benefits to an individual based solely on the individual's statement or other corroborating evidence—i.e., without requiring formal documentation of abuse in accordance with 24 CFR 5.2007(b). HUD recommends documentation in a confidential manner when a verbal statement or other evidence is accepted.

#### PHA Policy

If the PHA accepts an individual's statement or other corroborating evidence (as determined by the victim) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, the PHA will document acceptance of the statement or evidence in the individual's file.

#### **Failure to Provide Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(c)]**

In order to deny relief for protection under VAWA, a PHA must provide the individual requesting relief with a written request for documentation of abuse. If the individual fails to provide the documentation within 14 business days from the date of receipt, or such longer time as the PHA may allow, the PHA may deny relief for protection under VAWA.

#### **16-VII.E. CONFIDENTIALITY [24 CFR 5.2007(b)(4)]**

All information provided to the PHA regarding domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, including the fact that an individual is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, must be retained in confidence. This means that the PHA (1) may not enter the information into any shared database, (2) may not allow employees or others to access the information unless they are explicitly authorized to do so and have a need to know the information for purposes of their work, and (3) may not provide the information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that the disclosure is (a) requested or consented to by the individual in writing, (b) required for use in an eviction proceeding, or (c) otherwise required by applicable law.

##### PHA Policy

If disclosure is required for use in an eviction proceeding or is otherwise required by applicable law, the PHA will inform the victim before disclosure occurs so that safety risks can be identified and addressed.

<b>EXHIBIT 16-1: NOTICE TO PUBLIC HOUSING APPLICANTS AND TENANTS REGARDING THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA)</b>
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**Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence Against Women Act for Public Housing<sup>1</sup>****To all Tenants and Applicants**

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) provides protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. VAWA protections are not only available to women, but are available equally to all individuals regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.<sup>2</sup> The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the Federal agency that oversees that the Public Housing program is in compliance with VAWA. This notice explains your rights under VAWA. A HUD-approved certification form is attached to this notice. You can fill out this form to show that you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and that you wish to use your rights under VAWA.”

**Protections for Applicants**

If you otherwise qualify for assistance under Public Housing, you cannot be denied admission or denied assistance because you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

**Protections for Tenants**

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<sup>1</sup> Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

<sup>2</sup> Housing providers cannot discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic, including race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, or age. HUD-assisted and HUD-insured housing must be made available to all otherwise eligible individuals regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.

If you are receiving assistance under Washington County Community Development Agency's (CDA) Public Housing program, you may not be denied assistance, terminated from participation, or be evicted from your rental housing because you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Also, if you or an affiliated individual of yours is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking by a member of your household or any guest, you may not be denied rental assistance or occupancy rights under the CDA's Public Housing program solely on the basis of criminal activity directly relating to that domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Affiliated individual means your spouse, parent, brother, sister, or child, or a person to whom you stand in the place of a parent or guardian (for example, the affiliated individual is in your care, custody, or control); or any individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in your household.

### **Removing the Abuser or Perpetrator from the Household**

The PHA may divide (bifurcate) your lease in order to evict the individual or terminate the assistance of the individual who has engaged in criminal activity (the abuser or perpetrator) directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

If the PHA chooses to remove the abuser or perpetrator, the PHA may not take away the rights of eligible tenants to the unit or otherwise punish the remaining tenants. If the evicted abuser or perpetrator was the sole tenant to have established eligibility for assistance under the program, the PHA must allow the tenant who is or has been a victim and other household members to remain in the unit for a period of time, in order to establish eligibility under the program or under another HUD housing program covered by VAWA, or, find alternative housing.

In removing the abuser or perpetrator from the household, the PHA must follow Federal, State, and local eviction procedures. In order to divide a lease, the PHA may, but is not required to, ask you for documentation or certification of the incidences of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

### **Moving to Another Unit**

Upon your request, the PHA may permit you to move to another unit, subject to the availability of other units, and still keep your assistance. In order to approve a request, the PHA may ask you to provide documentation that you are requesting to move because of an incidence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. If the request is a request for emergency transfer, the PHA may ask you to submit a written request or fill out a form where you certify that you meet the criteria for an emergency transfer under VAWA. The criteria are:

**(1) You are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.** If the PHA does not already have documentation that you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, your housing provider may ask you for such documentation, as described in the documentation section below.

**(2) You expressly request the emergency transfer.** The PHA may choose to require that you submit a form, or may accept another written or oral request.

**(3) You reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your current unit.** This means you have a reason to fear that if you do not receive a transfer you would suffer violence in the very near future.

**OR**

**You are a victim of sexual assault and the assault occurred on the premises during the 90-calendar-day period before you request a transfer.** If you are a victim of sexual assault, then in addition to qualifying for an emergency transfer because you reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your unit, you may qualify for an emergency transfer if the sexual assault occurred on the premises of the property from which you are seeking your transfer, and that assault happened within the 90-calendar-day period before you expressly request the transfer.

The PHA will keep confidential requests for emergency transfers by victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and the location of any move by such victims and their families.

The PHA's emergency transfer plan provides further information on emergency transfers, and HP must make a copy of its emergency transfer plan available to you if you ask to see it.

**Documenting You Are or Have Been a Victim of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking**

The PHA can, but is not required to, ask you to provide documentation to "certify" that you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Such request from the PHA must be in writing, and the PHA must give you at least 14 business days (Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays do not count) from the day you receive the request to

provide the documentation. The PHA may, but does not have to, extend the deadline for the submission of documentation upon your request.

You can provide one of the following to the PHA as documentation. It is your choice which of the following to submit if the PHA asks you to provide documentation that you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

- A complete HUD-approved certification form given to you by the PHA with this notice, that documents an incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The form will ask for your name, the date, time, and location of the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and a description of the incident. The certification form provides for including the name of the abuser or perpetrator if the name of the abuser or perpetrator is known and is safe to provide.
- A record of a Federal, State, tribal, territorial, or local law enforcement agency, court, or administrative agency that documents the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Examples of such records include police reports, protective orders, and restraining orders, among others.
- A statement, which you must sign, along with the signature of an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, a medical professional or a mental health professional (collectively, “professional”) from whom you sought assistance in addressing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or the effects of abuse, and with the professional selected by you attesting under penalty of perjury that he or she believes that the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking are grounds for protection.



- Any other statement or evidence that the PHA has agreed to accept.

If you fail or refuse to provide one of these documents within the 14 business days, the PHA does not have to provide you with the protections contained in this notice.

If the PHA receives conflicting evidence that an incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking has been committed (such as certification forms from two or more members of a household each claiming to be a victim and naming one or more of the other petitioning household members as the abuser or perpetrator), the PHA has the right to request that you provide third-party documentation within thirty 30 calendar days in order to resolve the conflict. If you fail or refuse to provide third-party documentation where there is conflicting evidence, the PHA does not have to provide you with the protections contained in this notice.

### **Confidentiality**

The PHA must keep confidential any information you provide related to the exercise of your rights under VAWA, including the fact that you are exercising your rights under VAWA.

The PHA must not allow any individual administering assistance or other services on behalf of HP (for example, employees and contractors) to have access to confidential information unless for reasons that specifically call for these individuals to have access to this information under applicable Federal, State, or local law.

The PHA must not enter your information into any shared database or disclose your information to any other entity or individual. The PHA, however, may disclose the information provided if:

- You give written permission to the PHA to release the information on a time limited basis.

- The PHA needs to use the information in an eviction or termination proceeding, such as to evict your abuser or perpetrator or terminate your abuser or perpetrator from assistance under this program.
- A law requires the PHA to release the information.

VAWA does not limit the PHA's duty to honor court orders about access to or control of the property. This includes orders issued to protect a victim and orders dividing property among household members in cases where a family breaks up.

### **Reasons a Tenant Eligible for Occupancy Rights under VAWA May Be Evicted or Assistance May Be Terminated**

You can be evicted and your assistance can be terminated for serious or repeated lease violations that are not related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking committed against you. However, The PHA cannot hold tenants who have been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to a more demanding set of rules than it applies to tenants who have not been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

The protections described in this notice might not apply, and you could be evicted and your assistance terminated, if the PHA can demonstrate that not evicting you or terminating your assistance would present a real physical danger that:

- 1) Would occur within an immediate time frame, and
- 2) Could result in death or serious bodily harm to other tenants or those who work on the property.

If the PHA can demonstrate the above, the PHA should only terminate your assistance or evict you if there are no other actions that could be taken to reduce or eliminate the threat.

### **Other Laws**

VAWA does not replace any Federal, State, or local law that provides greater protection for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. You may be entitled to additional housing protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking under other Federal laws, as well as under State and local laws.

### **Non-Compliance with The Requirements of This Notice**

You may report a the PHA for violations of these rights and seek additional assistance, if needed, by contacting or filing a complaint with Minneapolis HUD field office.

### **For Additional Information**

You may view a copy of HUD's final VAWA rule at: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdysys/pkg/FR-2016-11-16/pdf/2016-25888.pdf>.

Additionally, the PHA must make a copy of HUD's VAWA regulations available to you if you ask to see them.

For questions regarding VAWA, please contact the Public Housing Manager.

For help regarding an abusive relationship, you may call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or, for persons with hearing impairments, 1-800-787-3224 (TTY). You may also contact Domestic Violence Crisis Line at 866-223-1111

For tenants who are or have been victims of stalking seeking help may visit the National Center for Victims of Crime's Stalking Resource Center at <https://www.victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center>.

For help regarding sexual assault, you may contact Domestic Violence Crisis Line at 866-223-1111

Victims of stalking seeking help may contact Domestic Violence Crisis Line at 866-223-1111

**Attachment:** Certification form HUD-5382 [form approved for this program to be included]

EXHIBIT 16-2 CERTIFICATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING AND ALTERNATE DOCUMENTATION, FORM HUD 5382
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**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE,        and Urban Development**  
**DATING VIOLENCE,**  
**SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING,**  
**AND ALTERNATE DOCUMENTATION**

Exp. 06/30/2017

**Purpose of Form:** The Violence Against Women Act (“VAWA”) protects applicants, tenants, and program participants in certain HUD programs from being evicted, denied housing assistance, or terminated from housing assistance based on acts of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against them. Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

**Use of This Optional Form:** If you are seeking VAWA protections from your housing provider, your housing provider may give you a written request that asks you to submit documentation about the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

In response to this request, you or someone on your behalf may complete this optional form and submit it to your housing provider, or you may submit one of the following types of third-party documentation:

- (1) A document signed by you and an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, or medical professional, or a mental health professional (collectively, “professional”) from whom you have sought assistance relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or the effects of abuse. The document must specify, under penalty of perjury, that the professional believes the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking occurred and meet the definition of “domestic violence,” “dating violence,” “sexual assault,” or “stalking” in HUD’s regulations at 24 CFR 5.2003.
- (2) A record of a Federal, State, tribal, territorial or local law enforcement agency, court, or administrative agency; or
- (3) At the discretion of the housing provider, a statement or other evidence provided by the applicant or tenant.

**Submission of Documentation:** The time period to submit documentation is 14 business days from the date that you receive a written request from your housing provider asking that you provide documentation of the occurrence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Your housing provider may, but is not required to, extend the time period to submit the documentation, if you request an extension of the time period. If the requested information is not received within 14 business days of when you received the request for the documentation, or any extension of the date provided by your housing provider, your housing provider does not need to grant you any of the VAWA protections. Distribution or issuance of this form does not serve as a written request for certification.

**Confidentiality:** All information provided to your housing provider concerning the incident(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking shall be kept confidential and such details

shall not be entered into any shared database. Employees of your housing provider are not to have access to these details unless to grant or deny VAWA protections to you, and such employees may not disclose this information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that disclosure is: (i) consented to by you in writing in a time-limited release; (ii) required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance; or (iii) otherwise required by applicable law.

**TO BE COMPLETED BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE,  
DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING**

1. Date the written request is received by victim: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name of victim: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Your name (if different from victim's): \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name(s) of other family member(s) listed on the lease: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Residence of victim: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Name of the accused perpetrator (if known and can be safely disclosed): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Relationship of the accused perpetrator to the victim: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Date(s) and times(s) of incident(s) (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Location of incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

In your own words, briefly describe the incident(s):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify that the information provided on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and recollection, and that the individual named above in Item 2 is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. I acknowledge that submission of false information could jeopardize program eligibility and could be the basis for denial of admission, termination of assistance, or eviction.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Signed on (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

**Public Reporting Burden:** The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response. This includes the time for collecting, reviewing, and reporting the data. The information provided is to be used by the housing provider to request certification that the applicant or tenant is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The information is subject to the confidentiality requirements of VAWA. This agency may not collect this information, and you are not required to complete this form, unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget control number.

ALTERNATE DOCUMENTATION
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Washington County CDA  
7645 Currell Blvd.  
Woodbury, MN 55125

**CERTIFICATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT OR STALKING**

Date delivered to resident \_\_\_\_\_.

**This form is a written request for documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. This form must be completed and returned by \_\_\_\_\_, (enter date, at least 14 business days after receipt by resident). If for some reason the resident cannot complete this form by this date, the resident should contact \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.**

**TO BE COMPLETED BY RESIDENT:**

Name of the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of residents listed on lease (if not the victim): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name of the perpetrator of the violence\*: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\*The victim is required to provide the name of perpetrator only if the name of the perpetrator is known and safe to provide.

Perpetrator's relation to victim: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Certification of the violence, (please check one):

- ☐ Attached a copy of a police report, [temporary or permanent restraining order], or [other] police or court record relating to the violence (bracketed language is not in the statute); or
- ☐ Had the section on Page 2 completed by a professional who helped me address the violence.

I hereby certify under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. I have also read and understand the statutory definitions (on Page 2) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking and I believe that based on the information I have provided, that I am a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. I acknowledge that submission of false information is a basis for denial of admission, termination of assistance or eviction.



Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

By signing above I have been informed that this information will remain confidential. However, I will allow the information to be shared with another Housing Authority if necessary. I also understand this information may be used if necessary in an eviction proceeding, or disclosed if required by applicable law. This information may also be required to disclose to your landlord if necessary to legally terminate a lease in place.

Page 1

**TO BE COMPLETED BY VICTIM SERVICE PROVIDER, ATTORNEY OR MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL, ONLY IF VICTIM IS CERTIFYING THE VIOLENCE BY A STATEMENT:**

This section may be completed by an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, attorney, or medical professional from whom the victim has sought assistance in addressing the violence or its effects.

Name of individual completing this section: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What category best describes you?      ☐ attorney      ☐ medical provider      ☐ victim service provider

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Agency/Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct and I believe that the incident(s) described above are bona fide incidents of abuse.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## DEFINITIONS:

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE – The term ‘domestic violence’ includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person’s acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction.

DATING VIOLENCE – The term ‘dating violence’ means violence committed by a person -

- A. who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and
- B. where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:
  - i. The length of the relation.
  - ii. The type of relationship.
  - iii. The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

STALKING – The term ‘stalking’ means –

- A. to follow, pursue, or repeatedly commit acts with the intent to kill, injure, harass, or intimidate another person; and
  - i. to place under surveillance with the intent to kill, injure, harass, or intimidate another person; and
- B. in the course of, or as a result of such following, pursuit, surveillance, or repeatedly committed acts, to place a person in reasonable fear of the death of, or serious bodily injury to, or to cause substantial emotional harm to –
  - i. that person;
  - ii. a member of the immediate family of that person; or
  - iii. the spouse or intimate partner of that person.

SEXUAL ASSAULT-The term ‘sexual assault’ means any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient. Falling under the definition of sexual assault are sexual activities as forced sexual intercourse, forcible sodomy, child molestation, incest, fondling, and attempted rape.

<b>EXHIBIT 16-3 EMERGENCY TRANSFER PLAN FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT OR STALKING</b>
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**Washington County Community Development Agency  
Public Housing/ Project based Housing**

**Emergency Transfer Plan for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual  
Assault, or Stalking**

**Emergency Transfers**

The Washington County Community Development Agency (CDA) is concerned about the safety of its tenants, and such concern extends to tenants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. In accordance with the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA),<sup>3</sup> CDA allows tenants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to request an emergency transfer from the tenant's current unit to another available unit. The ability to request a transfer is available regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.<sup>4</sup> The ability of the CDA to honor such request for tenants currently receiving assistance, however, may depend upon a preliminary determination that the tenant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and on whether the CDA has another dwelling unit that is available and is safe to offer the tenant for temporary or more permanent occupancy.

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<sup>3</sup> Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available to all victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

<sup>4</sup> Housing providers cannot discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic, including race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, or age. HUD-assisted and HUD-insured housing must be made available to all otherwise eligible individuals regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.

This plan identifies tenants who are eligible for an emergency transfer, the documentation needed to request an emergency transfer, confidentiality protections, how an emergency transfer may occur, and guidance to tenants on safety and security. This plan is based on a model emergency transfer plan published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Federal agency that oversees that Public Housing program or Project Based Assistance program is in compliance with VAWA.

### **Eligibility for Emergency Transfers**

A tenant who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, as provided in HUD's regulations at 24 CFR part 5, subpart L is eligible for an emergency transfer, if: the tenant reasonably believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence if the tenant remains within the same unit. If the tenant is a victim of sexual assault, the tenant may also be eligible to transfer if the sexual assault occurred on the premises within the 90-calendar-day period preceding a request for an emergency transfer.

A tenant requesting an emergency transfer must expressly request the transfer in accordance with the procedures described in this plan.

Tenants who are not in good standing may still request an emergency transfer if they meet the eligibility requirements in this section.

### **Emergency Transfer Request Documentation**

To request an emergency transfer, the tenant shall notify the CDA's management office and submit a written request for a transfer to the manager for an eligible available unit.. The CDA

will provide reasonable accommodations to this policy for individuals with disabilities. The tenant's written request for an emergency transfer should include either:

1. A statement expressing that the tenant reasonably believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence if the tenant were to remain in the same dwelling unit assisted under the CDA's program; OR
2. A statement that the tenant was a sexual assault victim and that the sexual assault occurred on the premises during the 90-calendar-day period preceding the tenant's request for an emergency transfer.

### **Confidentiality**

The CDA will keep confidential any information that the tenant submits in requesting an emergency transfer, and information about the emergency transfer, unless the tenant gives the CDA written permission to release the information on a time limited basis, or disclosure of the information is required by law or required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance from the covered program. This includes keeping confidential the new location of the dwelling unit of the tenant, if one is provided, from the person(s) that committed an act(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against the tenant. See the Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence Against Women Act For All Tenants for more information about the CDA's responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of information related to incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

### **Emergency Transfer Timing and Availability**

The CDA cannot guarantee that a transfer request will be approved or how long it will take to process a transfer request. The CDA will, however, act as quickly as possible to move a tenant

who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to another unit, subject to availability and safety of a unit. If a tenant reasonably believes a proposed transfer would not be safe, the tenant may request a transfer to a different unit. If a unit is available, the transferred tenant must agree to abide by the terms and conditions that govern occupancy in the unit to which the tenant has been transferred. The CDA may be unable to transfer a tenant to a particular unit if the tenant has not or cannot establish eligibility for that unit.

If the CDA has no safe and available units for which a tenant who needs an emergency is eligible, the CDA will assist the tenant in identifying other housing providers who may have safe and available units to which the tenant could move. At the tenant's request, the CDA will also assist tenants in contacting the local organizations offering assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that are attached to this plan.

### **Safety and Security of Tenants**

Pending processing of the transfer and the actual transfer, if it is approved and occurs, the tenant is urged to take all reasonable precautions to be safe.

Tenants who are or have been victims of domestic violence are encouraged to contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233, or a local domestic violence shelter, for assistance in creating a safety plan. For persons with hearing impairments, that hotline can be accessed by calling 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

Tenants who have been victims of sexual assault may call the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network's National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE, or visit the online hotline at <https://ohl.rainn.org/online/>.

Tenants who are or have been victims of stalking seeking help may visit the National Center for Victims of Crime's Stalking Resource Center at <https://www.victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center>.

**Attachment:** Local organizations offering assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Tubman Alliance

Canvas Health

For help regarding sexual assault, you may contact Domestic Violence Crisis Line at 866-223-1111

Victims of stalking seeking help may contact Domestic Violence Crisis Line at 866-223-1111

**Attachment:** Certification form HUD-5382 [form approved for this program to be included]



<b>EXHIBIT 16-4: EMERGENCY TRANSFER REQUEST FOR CERTAIN VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING FORM HUD 5383</b>
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**EMERGENCY TRANSFER  
REQUEST FOR CERTAIN  
VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE,  
SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING**

**U.S. Department of Housing  
and Urban Development**

OMB Approval No. 2577-0286  
Exp. 06/30/2017

**Purpose of Form:** If you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and you are seeking an emergency transfer, you may use this form to request an emergency transfer and certify that you meet the requirements of eligibility for an emergency transfer under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Although the statutory name references women, VAWA rights and protections apply to all victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. Using this form does not necessarily mean that you will receive an emergency transfer. See your housing provider's emergency transfer plan for more information about the availability of emergency transfers.

**The requirements you must meet are:**

**(1) You are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.** If your housing provider does not already have documentation that you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, your housing provider may ask you for such documentation. In response, you may submit Form HUD-5382, or any one of the other types of documentation listed on that Form.

**(2) You expressly request the emergency transfer.** Submission of this form confirms that you have expressly requested a transfer. Your housing provider may choose to require that you submit this form, or may accept another written or oral request. Please see your housing provider's emergency transfer plan for more details.

**(3) You reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your current unit.** This means you have a reason to fear that if you do not receive a transfer you would suffer violence in the very near future.

**OR**

**You are a victim of sexual assault and the assault occurred on the premises during the 90-calendar-day period before you request a transfer.** If you are a victim of

sexual assault, then in addition to qualifying for an emergency transfer because you reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your unit, you may qualify for an emergency transfer if the sexual assault occurred on the premises of the property from which you are seeking your transfer, and that assault happened within the 90-calendar-day period before you submit this form or otherwise expressly request the transfer.

**Submission of Documentation:** If you have third-party documentation that demonstrates why you are eligible for an emergency transfer, you should submit that documentation to your housing provider if it is safe for you to do so. Examples of third party documentation include, but are not limited to: a letter or other documentation from a victim service provider, social worker, legal assistance provider, pastoral counselor, mental health provider, or other professional from whom you have sought assistance; a current restraining order; a recent court order or other court records; a law enforcement report or records; communication records from the perpetrator of the violence or family members or friends of the perpetrator of the violence, including emails, voicemails, text messages, and social media posts.

**Confidentiality:** All information provided to your housing provider concerning the incident(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and concerning your request for an emergency transfer shall be kept confidential. Such details shall not be entered into any shared database. Employees of your housing provider are not to have access to these details unless to grant or deny VAWA protections or an emergency transfer to you. Such employees may not disclose this information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that disclosure is: (i) consented to by you in writing in a time-limited release; (ii) required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance; or (iii) otherwise required by applicable law.

**TO BE COMPLETED BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE PERSON REQUESTING A TRANSFER**

1. Name of victim requesting an emergency transfer: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Your name (if different from victim's) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name(s) of other family member(s) listed on the lease: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Name(s) of other family member(s) who would transfer with the victim: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Address of location from which the victim seeks to transfer: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Address or phone number for contacting the victim: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of the accused perpetrator (if known and can be safely disclosed): \_\_\_\_\_

8. Relationship of the accused perpetrator to the victim: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Date(s), Time(s) and location(s) of incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Is the person requesting the transfer a victim of a sexual assault that occurred in the past 90 days on the premises of the property from which the victim is seeking a transfer? If yes, skip question 11. If no, fill out question 11. \_\_\_\_\_

11. Describe why the victim believes they are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if they remain in their current unit.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. If voluntarily provided, list any third-party documentation you are providing along with this notice: \_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify that the information provided on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and that the individual named above in Item 1 meets the requirement laid out on this form for an emergency transfer. I acknowledge that submission of false information could jeopardize program eligibility and could be the basis for denial of admission, termination of assistance, or eviction.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Signed on (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

## 16 VIII.A COMMUNICATION

### PHA Policy

The Washington County CDA communicates with tenants regarding notices and certifications by using the U.S. Postal Service. If the tenant emails in questions or request information via email to the CDA, the CDA will take this as permission to respond in-kind to the tenant.

## **Table of Contents**

### **Introduction ABOUT THE MODEL ACOP**

HOW TO USE THE MODEL ACOP .....	Intro-i
ABOUT THE MODEL ACOP AND THE PUBLIC HOUSING LEASE .....	Intro-ii
REFERENCES CITED IN THE MODEL ACOP .....	Intro-ii
RESOURCES CITED IN THE MODEL ACOP .....	Intro-iii

### **Chapter 1 OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM AND PLAN**

INTRODUCTION .....	1-1
--------------------	-----

#### **PART I: THE PHA**

I.A. OVERVIEW .....	1-1
I.B. ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE PHA .....	1-2
I.C. PHA MISSION .....	1-3
I.D. THE PHA'S COMMITMENT TO ETHICS AND SERVICE .....	1-4

#### **PART II: THE PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM**

II.A. OVERVIEW AND HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM .....	1-5
II.B. PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM BASICS .....	1-6
II.C. PUBLIC HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS .....	1-6
II.D. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS .....	1-10

#### **PART III: THE ADMISSIONS AND CONTINUED OCCUPANCY POLICIES**

III.A. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY .....	1-11
III.B. CONTENTS OF THE POLICY .....	1-11
III.C. UPDATING AND REVISING THE POLICY .....	1-12

## Table of Contents

### Chapter 2 FAIR HOUSING AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

INTRODUCTION .....	2-1
--------------------	-----

#### PART I: NONDISCRIMINATION

I.A. OVERVIEW .....	2-3
I.B. NONDISCRIMINATION.....	2-4

#### PART II: POLICIES RELATED TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

II.A. OVERVIEW .....	2-6
II.B. DEFINITION OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION .....	2-7
II.C. REQUEST FOR AN ACCOMMODATION.....	2-8
II.D. VERIFICATION OF DISABILITY .....	2-9
II.E. APPROVAL/DENIAL OF A REQUESTED ACCOMMODATION.....	2-10
II.F. PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH HEARING OR VISION IMPAIRMENTS .....	2-11
II.G. PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY .....	2-12
II.H. DENIAL OR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE .....	2-13

#### PART III: IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)

III.A. OVERVIEW .....	2-14
III.B. ORAL INTERPRETATION.....	2-15
III.C. WRITTEN TRANSLATION.....	2-15
III.D. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN .....	2-17

#### EXHIBITS

2-1: DEFINITION OF A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY UNDER FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS .....	2-19
--	------

## Table of Contents

### Chapter 3 ELIGIBILITY

INTRODUCTION .....	3-1
--------------------	-----

#### **PART I: DEFINITIONS OF FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS**

I.A. OVERVIEW .....	3-2
I.B. FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD .....	3-2
I.C. FAMILY BREAK-UP AND REMAINING MEMBER OF TENANT FAMILY .....	3-3
I.D. HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD .....	3-4
I.E. SPOUSE, COHEAD, AND OTHER ADULT .....	3-4
I.F. DEPENDENT .....	3-5
I.G. FULL-TIME STUDENT .....	3-5
I.H. ELDERLY AND NEAR-ELDERLY PERSONS, AND ELDERLY FAMILY .....	3-6
I.I. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND DISABLED FAMILY .....	3-6
I.J. GUESTS .....	3-7
I.K. FOSTER CHILDREN AND FOSTER ADULTS .....	3-8
I.L. ABSENT FAMILY MEMBERS .....	3-9
I.M. LIVE-IN AIDE .....	3-11

#### **PART II: BASIC ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

II.A. INCOME ELIGIBILITY AND TARGETING .....	3-12
II.B. CITIZENSHIP OR ELIGIBLE IMMIGRATION STATUS .....	3-14
II.C. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS .....	3-16
II.D. FAMILY CONSENT TO RELEASE OF INFORMATION .....	3-17

#### **PART III: DENIAL OF ADMISSION**

III.A. OVERVIEW .....	3-21
III.B. REQUIRED DENIAL OF ADMISSION .....	3-22
III.C. OTHER PERMITTED REASONS FOR DENIAL OF ADMISSION .....	3-25
III.D. SCREENING .....	3-27
III.E. CRITERIA FOR DECIDING TO DENY ADMISSION .....	3-32
III.F. PROHIBITION AGAINST DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, AND STALKING .....	3-35
III.G. NOTICE OF ELIGIBILITY OR DENIAL .....	3-37

#### **EXHIBITS**

3-1: DETAILED DEFINITIONS RELATED TO DISABILITIES .....	3-38
---	------

## **Table of Contents**

### **Chapter 4 APPLICATIONS, WAITING LIST AND TENANT SELECTION**

INTRODUCTION .....	4-1
--------------------	-----

#### **PART I: THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

I.A. OVERVIEW .....	4-3
I.B. APPLYING FOR ASSISTANCE.....	4-3
I.C. ACCESSIBILITY OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS.....	4-5
I.D. PLACEMENT ON THE WAITING LIST .....	4-6

#### **PART II: MANAGING THE WAITING LIST**

II.A. OVERVIEW .....	4-8
II.B. ORGANIZATION OF THE WAITING LIST .....	4-8
II.C. OPENING AND CLOSING THE WAITING LIST .....	4-10
II.D. FAMILY OUTREACH .....	4-11
II.E. REPORTING CHANGES IN FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES .....	4-12
II.F. UPDATING THE WAITING LIST .....	4-13

#### **PART III: TENANT SELECTION**

III.A. OVERVIEW .....	4-16
III.B. SELECTION METHOD.....	4-17
III.C. NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION .....	4-23
III.D. THE APPLICATION INTERVIEW .....	4-24
III.E. FINAL ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION .....	4-26

### **Chapter 5 OCCUPANCY STANDARDS AND UNIT OFFERS**

INTRODUCTION .....	5-1
--------------------	-----

#### **PART I: OCCUPANCY STANDARDS**

I.A. OVERVIEW .....	5-1
I.B. DETERMINING UNIT SIZE.....	5-2
I.C. EXCEPTIONS TO OCCUPANCY STANDARDS .....	5-4

#### **PART II: UNIT OFFERS**

II.A. OVERVIEW .....	5-7
II.B. NUMBER OF OFFERS.....	5-7
II.C. TIME LIMIT FOR UNIT OFFER ACCEPTANCE OR REFUSAL .....	5-8
II.D. REFUSALS OF UNIT OFFERS .....	5-8
II.E. ACCESSIBLE UNITS.....	5-10
II.F. DESIGNATED HOUSING .....	5-10



## Table of Contents

### Chapter 6 INCOME AND RENT DETERMINATIONS

INTRODUCTION .....	6-1
--------------------	-----

#### PART I: ANNUAL INCOME

I.A. OVERVIEW .....	6-3
I.B. HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND INCOME .....	6-4
I.C. ANTICIPATING ANNUAL INCOME.....	6-7
I.D. EARNED INCOME.....	6-9
I.E. EARNED INCOME DISALLOWANCE.....	6-13
I.F. BUSINESS INCOME .....	6-17
I.G. ASSETS .....	6-19
I.H. PERIODIC PAYMENTS .....	6-27
I.I. PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF EARNINGS .....	6-29
I.J. WELFARE ASSISTANCE .....	6-30
I.K. PERIODIC AND DETERMINABLE ALLOWANCES.....	6-31
I.L. ADDITIONAL EXCLUSIONS FROM ANNUAL INCOME.....	6-32

#### PART II: ADJUSTED INCOME

II.A. INTRODUCTION .....	6-36
II.B. DEPENDENT DEDUCTION.....	6-37
II.C. ELDERLY OR DISABLED FAMILY DEDUCTION .....	6-37
II.D. MEDICAL EXPENSES DEDUCTION .....	6-38
II.E. DISABILITY ASSISTANCE EXPENSES DEDUCTION.....	6-40
II.F. CHILD CARE EXPENSE DEDUCTION.....	6-43
II.G. PERMISSIVE DEDUCTIONS.....	6-47

#### PART III: CALCULATING RENT

III.A. OVERVIEW OF INCOME-BASED RENT CALCULATIONS.....	6-48
III.B. FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS AFFECTING MINIMUM RENT .....	6-51
III.C. UTILITY ALLOWANCES .....	6-56
III.D. PRORATED RENT FOR MIXED FAMILIES.....	6-57
III.E. FLAT RENTS AND FAMILY CHOICE IN RENTS .....	6-58

#### EXHIBITS

6-1: ANNUAL INCOME INCLUSIONS .....	6-62
6-2: ANNUAL INCOME EXCLUSIONS .....	6-64
6-3: TREATMENT OF FAMILY ASSETS .....	6-66
6-4: EARNED INCOME DISALLOWANCE.....	6-68
6-5: THE EFFECT OF WELFARE BENEFIT REDUCTION.....	6-70

## Table of Contents

### Chapter 7 VERIFICATION

INTRODUCTION .....	7-1
--------------------	-----

#### **PART I: GENERAL VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

I.A. FAMILY CONSENT TO RELEASE OF INFORMATION .....	7-1
I.B. OVERVIEW OF VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS .....	7-2
I.C. UP-FRONT INCOME VERIFICATION (UIV) .....	7-4
I.D. THIRD-PARTY WRITTEN AND ORAL VERIFICATION .....	7-6
I.E. SELF-CERTIFICATION.....	7-9

#### **PART II: VERIFYING FAMILY INFORMATION**

II.A. VERIFICATION OF LEGAL IDENTITY.....	7-11
II.B. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS .....	7-12
II.C. DOCUMENTATION OF AGE .....	7-13
II.D. FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS .....	7-14
II.E. VERIFICATION OF STUDENT STATUS .....	7-15
II.F. DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITY .....	7-16
II.G. CITIZENSHIP OR ELIGIBLE IMMIGRATION STATUS.....	7-17
II.H. VERIFICATION OF PREFERENCE STATUS .....	7-18

#### **PART III: VERIFYING INCOME AND ASSETS**

III.A. EARNED INCOME.....	7-19
III.B. BUSINESS AND SELF EMPLOYMENT INCOME .....	7-19
III.C. PERIODIC PAYMENTS AND PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF EARNINGS.....	7-21
III.D. ALIMONY OR CHILD SUPPORT .....	7-22
III.E. ASSETS AND INCOME FROM ASSETS.....	7-23
III.F. NET INCOME FROM RENTAL PROPERTY .....	7-23
III.G. RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS .....	7-24
III.H. INCOME FROM EXCLUDED SOURCES .....	7-25
III.I. ZERO ANNUAL INCOME STATUS .....	7-25

#### **PART IV: VERIFYING MANDATORY DEDUCTIONS**

IV.A. DEPENDENT AND ELDERLY/DISABLED HOUSEHOLD DEDUCTIONS .....	7-26
IV.B. MEDICAL EXPENSE DEDUCTION .....	7-27
IV.C. DISABILITY ASSISTANCE EXPENSES .....	7-29
IV.D. CHILD CARE EXPENSES.....	7-31

#### **EXHIBITS**

7-1: Summary of Documentation Requirements for Noncitizens .....	7-34
--	------

## Table of Contents

### Chapter 8 LEASING AND INSPECTIONS

INTRODUCTION .....	8-1
--------------------	-----

#### PART I: LEASING

I.A. OVERVIEW .....	8-1
I.B. LEASE ORIENTATION .....	8-2
I.C. EXECUTION OF LEASE .....	8-3
I.D. MODIFICATIONS TO THE LEASE .....	8-4
I.E. SECURITY DEPOSITS .....	8-6
I.F. PAYMENTS UNDER THE LEASE .....	8-7

#### PART II: INSPECTIONS

II.A. OVERVIEW .....	8-11
II.B. TYPES OF INSPECTIONS.....	8-11
II.C. NOTICE AND SCHEDULING OF INSPECTIONS .....	8-13
II.D. INSPECTION RESULTS.....	8-14

#### PART III: LEASE AND SMOKE FREE ADDENDUMS

III. PUBLIC HOUSING LEASE.....	8-16
SMOKE-FREE LEASE ADDENDUM FOR WHISPERING PINES.....	8-35
SMOKE FREE LEASE ADDENDUM FOR SCATTERED SITE PUBLIC HOUSING.....	8-39

## Table of Contents

### Chapter 9

#### REEXAMINATIONS

INTRODUCTION .....	9-1
--------------------	-----

#### **PART I: ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS FOR FAMILIES PAYING INCOME BASED RENTS**

I.A. OVERVIEW .....	9-3
I.B. STREAMLINED ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS.....	9-3
I.C. SCHEDULING ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS .....	9-4
I.D. CONDUCTING ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS .....	9-6
I.E. EFFECTIVE DATES.....	9-8

#### **PART II: REEXAMINATIONS FOR FAMILIES PAYING FLAT RENTS**

II.A. OVERVIEW .....	9-10
II.B. FULL REEXAMINATION OF FAMILY INCOME AND COMPOSITION.....	9-10
II.C. REEXAMINATION OF FAMILY COMPOSITION (“ANNUAL UPDATE”) .....	9-11

#### **PART III: INTERIM REEXAMINATIONS**

III.A. OVERVIEW .....	9-14
III.B. CHANGES IN FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION.....	9-14
III.C. CHANGES AFFECTING INCOME OR EXPENSES.....	9-16
III.D. PROCESSING THE INTERIM REEXAMINATION .....	9-18

#### **PART IV: RECALCULATING TENANT RENT**

IV.A. OVERVIEW .....	9-21
IV.B. CHANGES IN UTILITY ALLOWANCES .....	9-21
IV.C. NOTIFICATION OF NEW TENANT RENT.....	9-21
IV.D. DISCREPANCIES.....	9-22

## Table of Contents

### Chapter 10 PETS

INTRODUCTION .....	10-1
--------------------	------

#### **PART I: ASSISTANCE ANIMALS**

I.A. OVERVIEW .....	10-3
I.B. APPROVAL OF SERVICE ANIMALS AND ASSISTANCE ANIMALS .....	10-3
I.C. CARE AND HANDLING .....	10-5

#### **PART II: PET POLICIES FOR ALL DEVELOPMENTS**

II.A. OVERVIEW .....	10-7
II.B. MANAGEMENT APPROVAL OF PETS .....	10-7
II.C. STANDARDS FOR PETS .....	10-9
II.D. PET RULES.....	10-13

#### **PART III: PET DEPOSITS AND FEES IN ELDERLY/DISABLED DEVELOPMENTS**

III.A. OVERVIEW .....	10-19
III.B. PET DEPOSITS.....	10-19
III.C. OTHER CHARGES.....	10-20

#### **PART IV: PET DEPOSITS AND FEES IN GENERAL OCCUPANCY DEVELOPMENTS**

IV.A. OVERVIEW .....	10-21
IV.B. PET DEPOSITS.....	10-21
IV.C. NON-REFUNDABLE NOMINAL PET FEE .....	10-22
IV.D. OTHER CHARGES.....	10-23

## **Table of Contents**

### **Chapter 11 COMMUNITY SERVICE**

INTRODUCTION .....	11-1
--------------------	------

#### **PART I: COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENT**

I.A. OVERVIEW .....	11-1
I.B. REQUIREMENTS.....	11-2
I.C. DETERMINATION OF EXEMPTION STATUS AND COMPLIANCE .....	11-7
I.D. DOCUMENTATION AND VERIFICATION.....	11-10
I.E. NONCOMPLIANCE.....	11-11

#### **PART II: IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE**

II.A. OVERVIEW .....	11-15
----------------------	-------

#### **EXHIBITS**

11-1: COMMUNITY SERVICE AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY POLICY .....	11-17
11-2: DEFINITION OF A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY UNDER SOCIAL SECURITY ACTS 216(i)(I) and Section 1416(excerpt) FOR PURPOSES OF EXEMPTION FROM COMMUNITY SERVICE .....	11-23
11-3: PHA DETERMINATION OF EXEMPTION FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE.....	11-25

## Table of Contents

### Chapter 12 TRANSFER POLICY

INTRODUCTION .....	12-1
--------------------	------

#### PART I: EMERGENCY TRANSFERS

I.A. OVERVIEW .....	12-1
I.B. EMERGENCY TRANSFERS .....	12-2
I.C. EMERGENCY TRANSFER PROCEDURES .....	12-2
I.D. COSTS OF TRANSFER.....	12-3

#### PART II: PHA REQUIRED TRANSFERS

II.A. OVERVIEW .....	12-3
II.B. TYPES OF PHA REQUIRED TRANSFERS .....	12-3
II.C. ADVERSE ACTION .....	12-7
II.D. COST OF TRANSFER.....	12-7

#### PART III: TRANSFERS REQUESTED BY TENANTS

III.A. OVERVIEW .....	12-7
III.B. TYPES OF RESIDENT REQUESTED TRANSFERS .....	12-7
III.C. ELIGIBILITY FOR TRANSFER.....	12-9
III.D. SECURITY DEPOSITS .....	12-10
III.E. COST OF TRANSFER.....	12-10
III.F. HANDLING OF REQUESTS .....	12-11

#### PART IV: TRANSFER PROCESSING

IV.A. OVERVIEW .....	12-12
IV.B. TRANSFER LIST .....	12-12
IV.C. TRANSFER OFFER POLICY .....	12-13
IV.D. GOOD CAUSE FOR UNIT REFUSAL.....	12-13
IV.E. DECONCENTRATION .....	12-14
IV.F. REEXAMINATION POLICIES FOR TRANSFERS .....	12-14

## Table of Contents

### Chapter 13 LEASE TERMINATIONS

INTRODUCTION .....	13-1
--------------------	------

#### **PART I: TERMINATION BY TENANT**

I.A. TENANT CHOOSES TO TERMINATE THE LEASE.....	13-3
---	------

#### **PART II: TERMINATION BY PHA – MANDATORY**

II.A. OVERVIEW .....	13-5
II.B. FAILURE TO PROVIDE CONSENT.....	13-5
II.C. FAILURE TO DOCUMENT CITIZENSHIP .....	13-5
II.D. FAILURE TO DISCLOSE AND DOCUMENT SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS...	13-6
II.E. FAILURE TO ACCEPT THE PHA’S OFFER OF A LEASE REVISION .....	13-6
II.F. METHAMPHETAMINE CONVICTION.....	13-7
II.G. LIFETIME REGISTERED SEX OFFENDERS .....	13-7
II.H. NONCOMPLIANCE WITH COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENTS.....	13-7
II.I. DEATH OF A SOLE FAMILY MEMBER .....	13-7

#### **PART III: TERMINATION BY PHA – OTHER AUTHORIZED REASONS**

III.A. OVERVIEW .....	13-9
III.B. MANDATORY LEASE PROVISIONS.....	13-10
III.C. OTHER AUTHORIZED REASONS FOR TERMINATION.....	13-16
III.D. ALTERNATIVES TO TERMINATION OF TENANCY .....	13-18
III.E. CRITERIA FOR DECIDING TO TERMINATE TENANCY .....	13-19
III.F. TERMINATIONS RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT OR STALKING .....	13-23

#### **PART IV: NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS, EVICTION PROCEDURES AND RECORD KEEPING**

IV.A. OVERVIEW .....	13-26
IV.B. CONDUCTING CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECKS .....	13-26
IV.C. DISCLOSURE OF CRIMINAL RECORDS TO FAMILY .....	13-27
IV.D. LEASE TERMINATION NOTICE.....	13-28
IV.E. EVICTION.....	13-30
IV.F. NOTIFICATION TO POST OFFICE .....	13-31
IV.G. RECORD KEEPING .....	13-31



## Table of Contents

### Chapter 14 GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

INTRODUCTION .....	14-1
<b>PART I: INFORMAL HEARINGS FOR PUBLIC HOUSING APPLICANTS</b>	
I.A. OVERVIEW .....	14-1
I.B. INFORMAL HEARING PROCESS .....	14-2
<b>PART II: INFORMAL HEARINGS WITH REGARD TO NONCITIZENS</b>	
II.A. HEARING AND APPEAL PROVISIONS FOR NONCITIZENS .....	14-7
<b>PART III: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS</b>	
III.A. REQUIREMENTS.....	14-11
III.B. DEFINITIONS.....	14-12
III.C. APPLICABILITY.....	14-13
III.D. INFORMAL SETTLEMENT OF GRIEVANCE.....	14-14
III.E. PROCEDURES TO OBTAIN A HEARING .....	14-15
III.F. SELECTION OF HEARING OFFICER/PANEL .....	14-16999
III.G. PROCEDURES GOVERNING THE HEARING .....	14-19
III.H. DECISION OF THE HEARING OFFICER/PANEL.....	14-24

### Chapter 15 PROGRAM INTEGRITY

INTRODUCTION .....	15-1
<b>PART I: PREVENTING, DETECTING, AND INVESTIGATING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE</b>	
I.A. PREVENTING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE .....	15-3
I.B. DETECTING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE .....	15-4
I.C. INVESTIGATING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE .....	15-5
<b>PART II: CORRECTIVE MEASURES AND PENALTIES</b>	
II.A. UNDER- OR OVERPAYMENT.....	15-7
II.B. FAMILY-CAUSED ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE.....	15-8
II.C. PHA-CAUSED ERRORS OR PROGRAM ABUSE .....	15-10
II.D. CRIMINAL PROSECUTION .....	15-11
II.E. FRAUD AND PROGRAM ABUSE RECOVERIES.....	15-12
<b>PART III: CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY</b>	
III.A. CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY.....	15-13

## Table of Contents

### Chapter 16 PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

INTRODUCTION .....	16-1
--------------------	------

#### **PART I: SETTING UTILITY ALLOWANCES**

I.A. OVERVIEW .....	16-3
I.B. UTILITY ALLOWANCES .....	16-3
I.C. SURCHARGES FOR PHA-FURNISHED UTILITIES.....	16-5
I.D. NOTICE REQUIREMENTS .....	16-5
I.E. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION.....	16-6

#### **PART II: ESTABLISHING FLAT RENTS AND PUBLIC HOUSING MAXIMUM RENTS**

II.A. OVERVIEW .....	16-7
II.B. FLAT RENTS .....	16-7

#### **PART III: FAMILY DEBTS TO THE PHA**

III.A. OVERVIEW .....	16-10
III.B. REPAYMENT POLICY .....	16-11

#### **PART IV: PUBLIC HOUSING ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (PHAS)**

IV.A. OVERVIEW .....	16-16
IV.B. PHAS INDICATORS .....	16-16
IV.C. PHAS SCORING.....	16-18

#### **PART V: RECORD KEEPING**

V.A. OVERVIEW .....	16-20
V.B. RECORD RETENTION .....	16-20
V.C. RECORDS MANAGEMENT .....	16-21

#### **PART VI: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH ENVIRONMENTAL INTERVENTION BLOOD LEAD LEVEL**

VI.A. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS .....	16-24
------------------------------------	-------

## **Table of Contents**

### **PART VII: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA): NOTIFICATION, DOCUMENTATION, AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

VII.A. OVERVIEW .....	16-26
VII.B. DEFINITIONS.....	16-26
VII.C. NOTIFICATION .....	16-27
VII.D. DOCUMENTATION .....	16-29
VII.E. CONFIDENTIALITY.....	16-31

### **EXHIBITS**

16-1: SAMPLE NOTICE TO PUBLIC HOUSING APPLICANTS AND RESIDENTS REGARDING THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA) .....	16-32
16-2: CERTIFICATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING AND ALTERNATE DOCUMENTATION, FORM HUD 5382 .....	16-41
16-3: EMERGENCY TRANSFER PLAN FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT OR STALKING .....	16-48
16-4: EMERGENCY TRANSFER REQUEST FOR CERTAIN VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING FORM HUD 5383 .....	16-54

### **Glossary**

## Table of Contents