

# HCV ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN

JANUARY 1, 2023

*St. Cloud HRA*



# HCV Administrative Plan

ST. CLOUD HRA

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## **GLOSSARY**

## **Introduction**

### **ABOUT THE REFERENCES CITED IN THE MODEL ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN**

#### **AUTHORITIES FOR POLICIES IN THE MODEL ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN**

The authority for HRA policies is derived from many sources. Primary among these sources are federal statutes, federal regulations, and guidance issued by HUD. State law also directs HRA policy. State law must be followed where such law exists and does not conflict with federal regulations. Industry practice may also be used to develop policy as long as it does not conflict with federal requirements or prohibitions.

#### **HUD**

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

HUD also provides guidance to HRAs through other means such as HUD-published guidebooks, expired HUD notices, and expired handbooks. Basing HRA policy on HUD guidance is optional, as long as HRA 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, HRA reliance on HUD guidance provides the HRA with a “safe harbor.”

Material posted 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 in various aspects of the program.

#### **State Law**

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

#### **Industry Practice**

Where no law or HUD authority exists on a particular subject, industry practice may support HRA policy. Industry practice refers to a way of doing things or a policy that has been adopted by a majority of HRAs.

#### **RESOURCES CITED IN THE MODEL ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN**

The model administrative plan 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 administrative plan 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 administrative plan and a list of references and document locations that are referenced in the model administrative plan or that may be helpful to you.

## Abbreviations

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

Abbreviation	Document
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
HCV GB	Housing Choice Voucher Program Guidebook (7420.10G), April 2001.
HUD-50058 IB	HUD-50058 Instruction Booklet
RHIIP FAQs	Rental Housing Integrity Improvement Program (RHIIP) Frequently Asked Questions.
VG	PIH Notice 2004-01 Verification Guidance, March 9, 2004.
HB 4350.3	Occupancy Requirements of Subsidized Multifamily Housing Programs

## Resources and Where to Find Them

Following is a list of resources helpful to the HRA or referenced in the model administrative plan, and the online location of each.

Document and Location
Code of Federal Regulations <a href="https://www.ecfr.gov/">https://www.ecfr.gov/</a>
Earned Income Disregard FAQ <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>
Eligibility of Students for Assisted Housing Under Section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937; Final Rule <a href="http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-19435.pdf">http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-19435.pdf</a>
Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System, Security Procedures for Upfront Income Verification data <a href="https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/EIVSECGUIDEHRA.PDF">https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/EIVSECGUIDEHRA.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>
Housing Choice Voucher Program Guidebook (7420.10G), Updated Chapters <a href="https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/guidebook">https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/guidebook</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 (HA), Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Notice <a href="https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/DOC_8993.PDF">https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/DOC_8993.PDF</a>
Notice PIH 2017-12, Administrative Guidance for Effective and Mandated Use of the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System <a href="https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/PIH2017-12EIVNOTICE.PDF">https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/PIH2017-12EIVNOTICE.PDF</a>
Notice PIH 2018-24, Verification of Social Security Numbers (SSNs) and Social Security (SS) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Benefits; and Effective Use of the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System's Identity Verification Report <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>
OMB Circular A-133 <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>
Project-Based Voucher Program; Final Rule <a href="http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2005-10-13/pdf/05-20035.pdf">http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2005-10-13/pdf/05-20035.pdf</a>
VAWA Final Rule <a href="http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2010-10-27/pdf/2010-26914.pdf">http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2010-10-27/pdf/2010-26914.pdf</a>

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 HRA receives its funding for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The HRA is not a federal department or agency. A public housing agency (HRA) 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 HRA enters into an Annual Contributions Contract with HUD to administer the program requirements on behalf of HUD. The HRA must ensure compliance with federal laws, regulations and notices and must establish policy and procedures to clarify federal requirements and to ensure consistency in program operation.

This chapter contains information about the HRA and its programs with emphasis on the HCV 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 (HRA). This part includes a description of the HRA, its jurisdiction, its programs, and its mission and intent.

Part II: The HCV Program. This part contains information about the Housing Choice Voucher program operation, roles and responsibilities, and partnerships.

Part III: The HCV Administrative Plan. This part discusses the purpose and organization of the plan and its revision requirements.



## **PART I: THE HRA**

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

This part explains the origin of the HRA's creation and authorization, the general structure of the organization, and the relationship between the HRA Board and staff.

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

The Section 8 tenant-based Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) assistance program is funded by the federal government and administered by the **Housing and Redevelopment Authority of St. Cloud, MN (HRA)** for the jurisdiction of **City of St. Cloud and the Counties of Benton, Sherburne and Wright**.

The officials of an HRA are known as commissioners or, collectively, as the board of commissioners. Commissioners are appointed in accordance with state housing law and generally serve in the same capacity as the directors of a corporation, establishing policies under which the HRA conducts business, ensuring that policies are followed by HRA staff and ensuring that the HRA is successful in its mission. The board is responsible for preserving and expanding the agency's resources and assuring the agency's continued viability.

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

The principal staff member of the HRA is the executive director (ED), hired and appointed by the board of commissioners. The executive director is directly responsible for carrying out the policies established by the board and is delegated the responsibility for hiring, training and supervising the HRA staff in order to manage the day-to-day operations of the HRA. The executive director is responsible for ensuring compliance with federal and state laws and directives for the programs managed. In addition, the executive director's duties include budgeting and financial planning for the agency.

### **1-I.C. HRA 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 guiding direction for developing strategy, defining critical success factors, searching out key opportunities, making resource allocation choices, satisfying clients and stakeholders, and making decisions.

#### HRA Policy

To enhance the communities we serve by providing housing opportunities, fostering stability, and promoting neighborhood revitalization.

## **1-I.D. THE HRA'S PROGRAMS**

The following programs are included under this administrative plan:

### HRA Policy

The HRA's administrative plan is applicable to the operation of the Housing Choice Voucher program. In addition, the administrative plan addresses policies for the following special programs:

Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program

Shared housing

Manufactured home (where family owns the home and leases the space)

## **1-I.E. THE HRA'S COMMITMENT TO ETHICS AND SERVICE**

As a public service agency, the HRA is committed to providing excellent service to HCV program participants, owners, and to the community. The HRA's standards include:

- Administer applicable federal and state laws and regulations to achieve high ratings in performance measurement indicators while maintaining efficiency in program operation to ensure fair and consistent treatment of clients served.
- Provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing – in compliance with program housing quality standards – for very low income families while ensuring that family rents are fair, reasonable, and affordable.
- 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 equal opportunity for very low-income families of all ethnic backgrounds to experience freedom of housing choice.
- Promote a housing program which maintains quality service and integrity while providing an incentive to private property owners to rent to very low-income families.
- Promote a market-driven housing program that will help qualified low-income families be successful in obtaining affordable housing and increase the supply of housing choices for such families.
- Create positive public awareness and expand the level of family, owner, and community support in accomplishing the HRA'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 HRA's support systems and a high level of commitment to our employees and their development.

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

## **PART II: THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM**

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

The intent of this section is to provide the public and staff with information related to the overall operation of the program. There have been many changes to the program since its inception in 1974 and a brief history of the program will assist the reader to better understand the program.

The United States Housing Act of 1937 (the “Act”) is responsible for the birth of federal housing program initiatives. The Act was intended to provide financial assistance to states and cities for public works projects, slum clearance and the development of affordable housing developments for low-income residents.

The Housing and Community Development (HCD) Act of 1974 created a new federally assisted housing program – the Section 8 Existing program (also known as the Section 8 Certificate program). The HCD Act represented a significant shift in federal housing strategy from locally owned public housing to privately owned rental housing.

Under the Certificate program, federal housing assistance payments were made directly to private owners of rental housing, where this housing was made available to lower-income families. Eligible families were able to select housing in the private rental market. Assuming that the housing met certain basic physical standards of quality (“housing quality standards”) and was within certain HUD-established rent limitations (“fair market rents”), the family would be able to receive rental assistance in the housing unit. Family contribution to rent was generally set at 30 percent of the family’s adjusted income, with the remainder of the rent paid by the program.

Another unique feature of the Certificate program was that the rental assistance remained with the eligible family, if the family chose to move to another privately-owned rental unit that met program requirements (in contrast to the public housing program where the rental assistance remains with the unit, should the family decide to move). Consequently, the Certificate program was characterized as tenant-based assistance, rather than unit-based assistance.

The Housing and Community Development (HCD) Act of 1987 authorized a new version of tenant-based assistance – the Section 8 Voucher program. The Voucher program was very similar to the Certificate program in that eligible families were able to select housing in the private rental market and receive assistance in that housing unit.

However, the Voucher program permitted families more options in housing selection. Rental housing still had to meet the basic housing quality standards, but there was no fair market rent limitation on rent. In addition, family contribution to rent was not set at a limit of 30 percent of adjusted income. Consequently, depending on the actual rental cost of the unit selected, a family might pay more or less than 30 percent of their adjusted income for rent.

From 1987 through 1999, public housing agencies managed both the Certificate and Voucher tenant-based assistance programs, with separate rules and requirements for each. From 1994 through 1998, HUD published a series of new rules, known as “conforming” rules, to more closely combine and align the two similar housing programs, to the extent permitted by the law.

In 1998, the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act (QHWRA) – also known as the Public Housing Reform Act – was signed into law. QHWRA eliminated all statutory differences between the Certificate and Voucher tenant-based programs and required that the two programs be merged into a single tenant-based assistance program, now known as the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program.

The HCV program was modeled closely on the pre-merger Voucher program. However, unlike the pre-merger Voucher program, the HCV program requires an assisted family to pay at least 30 percent of adjusted income for rent.

The transition of assistance from the Certificate and Voucher programs to the new HCV program began in October 1999. By October 2001, all families receiving tenant-based assistance were converted to the HCV program.



## **1-II.B. HCV PROGRAM BASICS**

The purpose of the HCV program is to provide rental assistance to eligible families. The rules and regulations of the HCV program are determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The HRA is afforded choices in the operation of the program which are included in the HRA's administrative plan, a document approved by the board of commissioners of the HRA.

The HCV program offers mobility to eligible families because they may search for suitable housing anywhere in the HRA's jurisdiction and may also be eligible to move under portability to other HRAs' jurisdictions.

When a family is determined to be eligible for the program and funding is available, the HRA issues the family a housing voucher. When the family finds a suitable housing unit and funding is available, the HRA will enter into a contract with the owner and the family will enter into a lease with the owner. Each party makes their respective payment to the owner so that the owner receives full rent.

Even though the family is determined to be eligible for the program, the owner has the responsibility of approving the family as a suitable renter. The HRA continues to make payments to the owner as long as the family is eligible and the housing unit continues to qualify under the program.

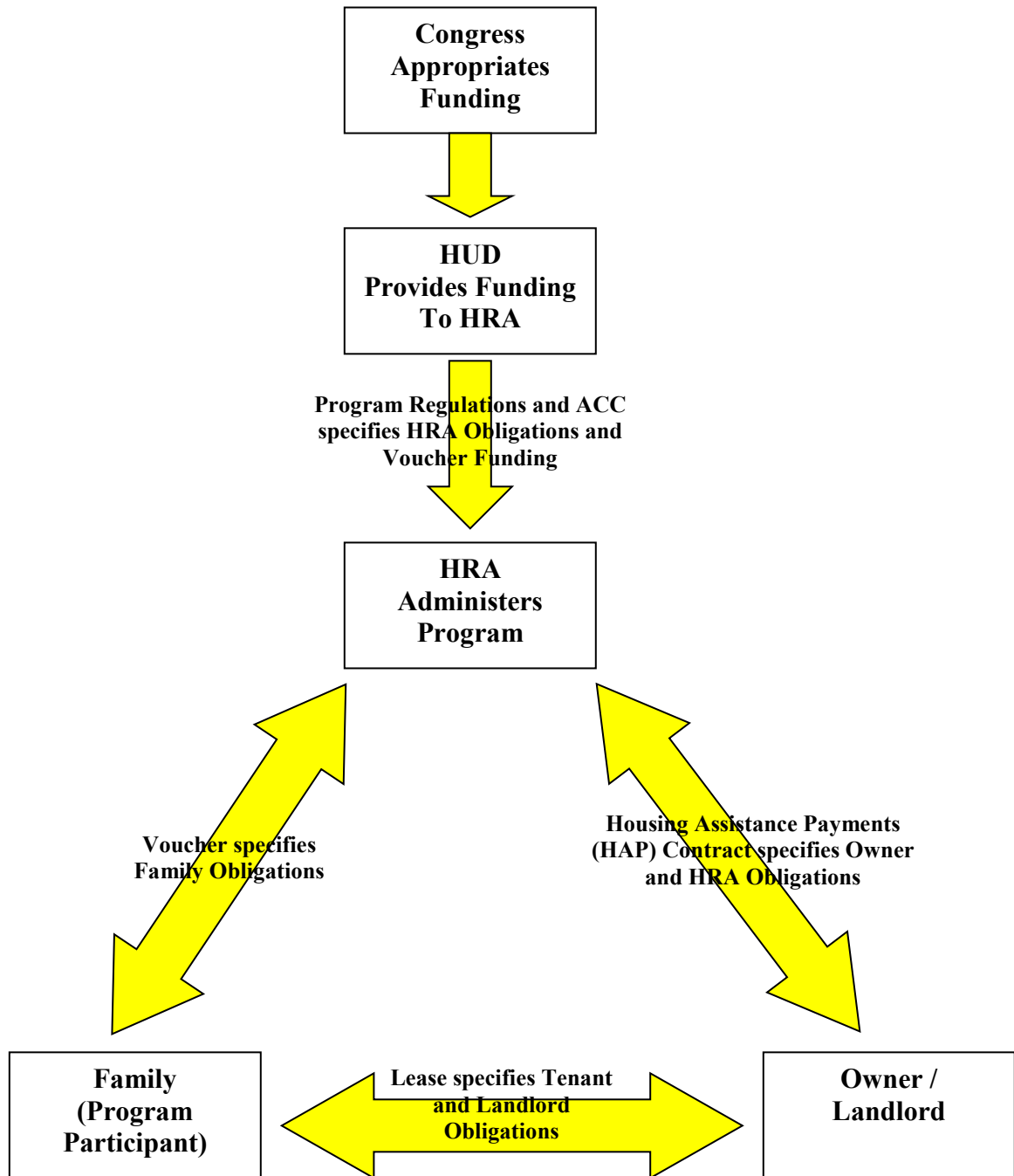
## **1-II.C. THE HCV PARTNERSHIPS**

To administer the HCV program, the HRA enters into a contractual relationship with HUD (Consolidated Annual Contributions Contract). The HRA also enters into contractual relationships with the assisted family and the owner or landlord of the housing unit.

For the HCV program to work and be successful, all parties involved – HUD, the HRA, the owner, and the family – have important roles to play. The roles and responsibilities of all parties are defined in federal regulations and in legal documents that parties execute to participate in the program.

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

## The HCV Relationships:



## **What Does HUD Do?**

HUD has the following major responsibilities:

- Develop regulations, requirements, handbooks, notices and other guidance to implement HCV housing program legislation passed by Congress;
- Allocate HCV program funds to HRAs;
- Provide technical assistance to HRAs on interpreting and applying HCV program requirements;
- Monitor HRA compliance with HCV program requirements and HRA performance in program administration.

## **What Does the HRA Do?**

The HRA administers the HCV program under contract with HUD and has the following major responsibilities:

- Establish local policies to administer the program;
- Review applications from interested applicants to determine whether they are eligible for the program;
- Maintain a waiting list and select families for admission;
- Issue vouchers to eligible families and provide information on how to lease a unit;
- Conduct outreach to owners, with special attention to owners outside areas of poverty or minority concentration;
- Approve the rental unit (including assuring compliance with housing quality standards and rent reasonableness), the owner, and the tenancy;
- Make housing assistance payments to the owner in a timely manner;
- Recertify families for continued eligibility under the program;
- Ensure that owners and families comply with their contractual obligations;
- Provide families and owners with prompt, professional service;
- Comply with all fair housing and equal opportunity requirements, HUD regulations and requirements, the Annual Contributions Contract, HUD-approved applications for funding, the HRA's administrative plan, and other applicable federal, state and local laws.

## **What Does the Owner Do?**

The owner has the following major responsibilities:

- Screen families who apply for tenancy, to determine suitability as renters.
  - The HRA can provide some information to the owner, but the primary responsibility for tenant screening rests with the owner.
  - The owner should consider family background factors such as rent and bill-paying history, history of caring for property, respecting the rights of others to peaceful enjoyment of the property, compliance with essential conditions of tenancy, whether the family is engaging in drug-related criminal activity or other criminal activity that might threaten others.
- Comply with the terms of the Housing Assistance Payments contract executed with the HRA;
- Comply with all applicable fair housing laws and do not discriminate against anyone;
- Maintain the housing unit in accordance with Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and make necessary repairs in a timely manner;
- Collect rent due from the assisted family and otherwise comply with and enforce provisions of the dwelling lease.

## **What Does the Family Do?**

The family has the following responsibilities:

- Provide the HRA with complete and accurate information as determined by the HRA to be necessary for administration of the program;
- Make their best and most timely efforts to locate qualified and suitable housing;
- Attend all appointments scheduled by the HRA;
- Allow the HRA to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice;
- Take responsibility for care of the housing unit, including any violations of housing quality standards caused by the family;
- Comply with the terms of the lease with the owner;
- Comply with the family obligations of the voucher;
- Not commit serious or repeated violations of the lease;
- Not engage in drug-related or violent criminal activity;
- Notify the HRA and the owner before moving or terminating the lease;
- Use the assisted unit only for residence and as the sole residence of the family. Not sublet the unit, assign the lease, or have any interest in the unit;
- Promptly notify the HRA of any changes in family composition;
- Not commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any housing programs.

## **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 100: The Fair Housing Act
- 24 CFR Part 982: Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance: Housing Choice Voucher Program
- 24 CFR Part 983: Project-Based Vouchers
- 24 CFR Part 985: The Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP)

## **PART III: THE HCV ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN**

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

The administrative plan is required by HUD. The purpose of the administrative plan is to establish policies for carrying out the programs in a manner consistent with HUD requirements and local goals and objectives contained in the HRA's agency plan. This administrative plan is a supporting document to the HRA agency plan, and is available for public review as required by CFR 24 Part 903.

This administrative plan is set forth to define the HRA's local policies for operation of the housing programs in accordance with federal laws and regulations. All issues related to the HCV program not addressed in this document are governed by such federal regulations, HUD handbooks and guidebooks, notices, and other applicable law. The policies in this administrative plan have been designed to ensure compliance with the consolidated ACC and all HUD-approved applications for program funding.

The HRA is responsible for complying with all changes in HUD regulations pertaining to the HCV program. If such changes conflict with this plan, HUD regulations will have precedence.

Administration of the HCV program and the functions and responsibilities of HRA staff shall be in compliance with the HRA's personnel policy and HUD regulations as well as all federal, state and local fair housing laws and regulations.

### **1-III.B. CONTENTS OF THE PLAN [24 CFR 982.54]**

The HUD regulations at 24 CFR 982.54 define the policies that must be included in the administrative plan. They are as follow:

- Selection and admission of applicants from the HRA waiting list, including any HRA admission preferences, procedures for removing applicant names from the waiting list, and procedures for closing and reopening the HRA waiting list (Chapter 4);
- Issuing or denying vouchers, including HRA policy governing the voucher term and any extensions of the voucher term. If the HRA decides to allow extensions of the voucher term, the HRA administrative plan must describe how the HRA determines whether to grant extensions, and how the HRA determines the length of any extension (Chapter 5);
- Any special rules for use of available funds when HUD provides funding to the HRA for a special purpose (e.g., desegregation), including funding for specified families or a specified category of families (Chapter 4);

- Occupancy policies, including definition of what group of persons may qualify as a 'family', definition of when a family is considered to be 'continuously assisted'; standards for denying admission or terminating assistance based on criminal activity or alcohol abuse in accordance with 982.553 (Chapters 3 and 12);
- Encouraging participation by owners of suitable units located outside areas of low income or minority concentration (Chapter 13);
- Assisting a family that claims that illegal discrimination has prevented the family from leasing a suitable unit (Chapter 2);
- Providing information about a family to prospective owners (Chapters 3 and 9);
- Disapproval of owners (Chapter 13);
- Subsidy standards (Chapter 5);
- Family absence from the dwelling unit (Chapter 12);
- How to determine who remains in the program if a family breaks up (Chapter 3);
- Informal review procedures for applicants (Chapter 16);
- Informal hearing procedures for participants (Chapter 16);
- The process for establishing and revising voucher payment standards, including policies on administering decreases in the payment standard during the HAP contract term (Chapter 16);
- The method of determining that rent to owner is a reasonable rent (initially and during the term of a HAP contract) (Chapter 8);
- Special policies concerning special housing types in the program (e.g., use of shared housing) (Chapter 15);
- Policies concerning payment by a family to the HRA of amounts the family owes the HRA (Chapter 16);
- Interim redeterminations of family income and composition (Chapter 11);
- Restrictions, if any, on the number of moves by a participant family (Chapter 10);
- Approval by the board of commissioners or other authorized officials to charge the administrative fee reserve (Chapter 16);
- Procedural guidelines and performance standards for conducting required housing quality standards inspections (Chapter 8); and
- HRA screening of applicants for family behavior or suitability for tenancy (Chapter 3).



## **Mandatory vs. Discretionary Policy**

HUD makes a distinction between:

- Mandatory policies: those driven by legislation, regulations, current handbooks, notices, and legal opinions, and
- Optional, non-binding guidance, including guidebooks, notices that have expired and recommendations from individual HUD staff.

HUD expects HRAs to adopt local policies and procedures that are consistent with mandatory policies in areas where HUD gives the HRA discretion. The HRA's administrative plan is the foundation of those policies and procedures. HUD's directions require HRAs to make policy choices that provide sufficient guidance to staff and ensure consistency to program applicants and participants.

Creating policies based upon HUD guidance is not mandatory, but provides an HRA with a "safe harbor." HUD has already determined that the recommendations and suggestions it makes are consistent with mandatory policies. If an HRA adopts an alternative strategy, it must make its own determination that the alternative approach 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 HUD's safe harbor, but HRAs should carefully think through those decisions.

### **1-III.C. ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN**

The plan is organized to provide information to users in particular areas of operation.

### **1-III.D. UPDATING AND REVISING THE PLAN**

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

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will review and update the plan as needed, to reflect changes in regulations, HRA 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 HRAs 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 processes. The responsibility to further nondiscrimination pertains to all areas of the HRA's housing choice voucher (HCV) operations.

This chapter describes HUD regulations and HRA 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 HRA regarding nondiscrimination.

Part II: Policies Related to Persons with Disabilities. This part discusses the rules and policies of the housing choice voucher 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 HRA to ensure meaningful access to the HCV 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 HRAs to treat all applicants and participants equally, providing the same opportunity to access services, 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 HRA 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 Equal Access to Housing in HUD Programs Regardless of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity Final Rule, published in the *Federal Register* February 3, 2012 and further clarified in Notice PIH 2014-20
- Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA)

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

Any applicable state laws or local ordinances and any legislation protecting individual rights of tenants, applicants, or staff that may subsequently be enacted will also apply.

#### HRA Policy

Under the Minnesota Human Rights Act, housing is a protected area, and it is illegal to treat applicants and participants differently on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, public assistance, sexual orientation, or familial status.

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

Federal regulations prohibit discrimination against certain protected classes and other groups of people. State and local requirements, as well as HRA policies, can prohibit discrimination based on other factors.

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

### HRA Policy

The HRA will not discriminate on the basis of creed or the receipt of public assistance.  
[Minn. Stat. 363A.09, Minn. Stat. 363A.10]

The HRA 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 housing choice voucher program
- Provide housing that is different from that provided to others
- Subject anyone to segregation or disparate treatment
- Subject anyone to sexual harassment
- 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 participant toward or away from a particular area based 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 and Owners**

The HRA must take steps to ensure that families and owners are fully aware of all applicable civil rights laws. As part of the briefing process, the HRA must provide information to HCV applicant families about civil rights requirements and the opportunity to rent in a broad range of neighborhoods [24 CFR 982.301]. The Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract informs owners of the requirement not to discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, familial status, or disability in connection with the contract.

## **Discrimination Complaints**

If an applicant or participant believes that any family member has been discriminated against by the HRA or an owner, the family should advise the HRA. The HRA should make every reasonable attempt to determine whether the applicant's or participant's assertions have merit and take any warranted corrective action. In addition, the HRA is required to provide the applicant or participant with information about how to file a discrimination complaint [24 CFR 982.304].

Upon receipt of a housing discrimination complaint, the HRA 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]

### HRA Policy

Applicants or participants who believe that they have been subject to unlawful discrimination may notify the HRA either orally or in writing.

Within 10 business days of receiving the complaint, the HRA will provide a written notice to those alleged to have violated the rule. The HRA 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 HRA will attempt to remedy discrimination complaints made against the HRA and will investigate all allegations of discrimination.

Within 10 business days following the conclusion of the HRA's investigation, the HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA must ensure that persons with disabilities have full access to the HRA's programs and services. This responsibility begins with the first contact by an interested family and continues through every aspect of the program.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will ask all applicants and participants if they require any type of accommodations, in writing, on the intake application, reexamination documents, and notices of adverse action by the HRA, 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 name and phone number of designated staff will be provided to process requests for accommodation.

The HRA will display posters and other housing information and signage in locations throughout the HRA's office in such a manner as to be easily readable from a wheelchair.

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

A reasonable accommodation is an adjustment made to a rule, policy, practice, or service that allows a person with a disability to have equal access to the HCV program. For example, reasonable accommodations may include making home visits, extending the voucher term, or approving an exception payment standard in order for a participant to lease an accessible dwelling unit.

Federal regulations stipulate that requests for accommodations will be considered reasonable if they do not create an “undue financial and administrative burden” for the HRA, 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 needed, the HRA will modify normal procedures to accommodate the needs of a person with disabilities. Examples include:

- Permitting applications and reexaminations to be completed by mail
- Conducting home visits
- Using higher payment standards (either within the acceptable range or with HUD approval of a payment standard outside the HRA range) if the HRA determines this is necessary to enable a person with disabilities to obtain a suitable housing unit
- Providing time extensions for locating a unit when necessary because of lack of availability of accessible units or special challenges of the family in seeking a unit
- Permitting an authorized designee or advocate to participate in the application or certification process and any other meetings with HRA staff

## **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 HRA 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 HRA's programs and services.

If the need for the accommodation is not readily apparent or known to the HRA, the family must explain the relationship between the requested accommodation and the disability. There must be an identifiable connection, or nexus, between the requested accommodation and the individual's disability.

### HRA Policy

The HRA will encourage the family to make its request in writing using a reasonable accommodation request form. However, the HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA's programs and services.

If a person's disability is obvious or otherwise known to the HRA, 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 HRA, the HRA 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 HRA 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. 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 HRA must request only information that is necessary to evaluate the disability-related need for the accommodation. The HRA will 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 HRA does receive confidential information about a person's specific diagnosis, treatment, or the nature or severity of the disability, the HRA will dispose of it. In place of the information, the HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA, or fundamentally alter the nature of the HRA's HCV operations (including the obligation to comply with HUD requirements and regulations).

Requests for accommodations must be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account factors such as the overall size of the HRA'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 HRA 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 HRA may verify the need for the requested accommodation.

HRA Policy

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

If the HRA 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 HRA's decision through an informal review (if applicable) or informal hearing (see Chapter 16).

If the HRA 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 HRA's operations), the HRA will discuss with the family whether an alternative accommodation could effectively address the family's disability-related needs without a fundamental alteration to the HCV program and without imposing an undue financial and administrative burden.

If the HRA believes that the family has failed to identify a reasonable alternative accommodation after interactive discussion and negotiation, the HRA 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.

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

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

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

### HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA's policies concerning physical accessibility must be readily available to applicants and participants. They can be found in three key documents:

- This plan describes the key policies that govern the HRA'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 HRA Plan provides information about self-evaluation, needs assessment, and transition plans.

The design, construction, or alteration of HRA facilities must conform to the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS). 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 HCV program.

When issuing a voucher to a family that includes an individual with disabilities, the HRA will include a current list of available accessible units known to the HRA and will assist the family in locating an available accessible unit, if necessary.

In general, owners must permit the family to make reasonable modifications to the unit. However, the owner is not required to pay for the modification and may require that the unit be restored to its original state at the family's expense when the family moves.

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

A HRA'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 982.552 (2)(iv)].

When applicants with disabilities are denied assistance, the notice of denial must inform them of the HRA's informal review process and their right to request an informal review. In addition, the notice must inform applicants with disabilities of their right to request reasonable accommodations to participate in the informal review process.

When a participant family's assistance is terminated, the notice of termination must inform them of the HRA's informal hearing process and their right to request a hearing and reasonable accommodation.

When reviewing reasonable accommodation requests, the HRA must consider whether any mitigating circumstances can be verified to explain and overcome the problem that led to the HRA's decision to deny or terminate assistance. If a reasonable accommodation will allow the family to meet the requirements, the HRA must make the accommodation.



## **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 HCV 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 HRA 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 is 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 administrative plan, LEP persons are HCV applicants and participants, and parents and family members of applicants and participants.

In order to determine the level of access needed by LEP persons, the HRA 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 Housing Choice Voucher 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 HRA and costs. Balancing these four factors will ensure meaningful access by LEP persons to critical services while not imposing undue burdens on the HRA.

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

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

### HRA Policy

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

When exercising the option to conduct remote briefings, informal reviews, or hearings, however, the HRA 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 HRA. The HRA, at its discretion, may choose to use the language services even when LEP persons desire to use an interpreter of their choosing. The interpreter may be a family member or friend. If the interpreter chosen by the family is a minor, the HRA will not rely on the minor to serve as the interpreter.

The HRA 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 and possible, according to its language assistance plan (LAP), the HRA will train and hire bilingual staff to be available to act as interpreters and translators, will pool resources with other HRAs, 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.

### HRA Policy

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

The HRA 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 HRA does not translate vital written materials, but provides 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.

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

After completing the four-factor analysis and deciding what language assistance services are appropriate, the HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA's Housing Choice Voucher program and services.

### HRA Policy

If it is determined that the HRA serves very few LEP persons, and the HRA has very limited resources, the HRA 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 HRA 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.



<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; genitourinary; 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 life 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 HRA) 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 HCV 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 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 \$480 dependent 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 HCV program, yet an accommodation is needed to provide equal opportunity.

## Chapter 3

### ELIGIBILITY

#### INTRODUCTION

The HRA is responsible for ensuring that every individual and family admitted to the HCV 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 HRA to confirm eligibility and determine the level of the family's assistance.

To be eligible for the HCV program:

- The applicant family must:
  - Qualify as a family as defined by HUD and the HRA.
  - 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 HRA's collection and use of family information as provided for in HRA-provided consent forms.
  - Not currently be receiving a duplicative subsidy.
- The HRA must determine that the current or past behavior of household members does not include activities that are prohibited by HUD or the HRA.

This chapter contains three parts:

Part I: Definitions of Family and Household Members. This part contains HUD and HRA 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 Assistance. This part covers factors related to an applicant's past or current conduct (e.g. criminal activity) that can cause the HRA to deny assistance.





## **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 assisted unit. This part provides information that is needed to correctly identify family and household members, and to apply HUD's eligibility rules.

### **3-I.B. FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD [24 CFR 982.201(c); FR Notice 02/03/12; Notice PIH 2014-20]**

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

#### **Family**

To be eligible for assistance, an applicant must qualify as a family. *Family* as defined by HUD includes, but is not limited to the following, regardless 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 HRA 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.

#### **HRA 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 notify the HRA if the family's composition changes.

#### **Household**

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

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

#### **Family Breakup [24 CFR 982.315; Notice PIH 2017-08]**

Except under the following conditions, the HRA 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 an occurrence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the HRA 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-IX.D of this plan.)
- In accordance with Notice PIH 2017-08, for HUD–Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD–VASH) vouchers, when the veteran is the perpetrator of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the victim must continue to be assisted. Upon termination of the perpetrator’s HUD–VASH voucher, the victim should be given a regular HCV if one is available, and the perpetrator’s HUD–VASH voucher should be used to serve another eligible family. If a regular HCV is not available, the victim will continue to use the HUD–VASH voucher, which must be issued to another eligible family upon the voucher’s turnover.
- If a court determines the disposition of property between members of the assisted family, the HRA is bound by the court’s determination of which family members continue to receive assistance.

#### HRA 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 date. Other former family members may make a new application with a new application date if the waiting list is open.

If a family breaks up into two otherwise eligible families while receiving assistance, only one of the new families will continue to be assisted.

In the absence of a judicial decision or an agreement among the original family members, the HRA will determine which family will retain their placement on the waiting list or continue to receive assistance. In making its determination, the HRA 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 the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including a family member who was forced to leave an assisted unit as a result of such actual or threatened abuse; (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 an assisted family who remains in the unit when other members of the family have left the unit. 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.

#### HRA 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 may be designated as head of household.

### **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.

#### HRA 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.

#### HRA Policy

Minors who are emancipated 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.

### **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 dependent allowance as described in Chapter 6.

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

##### HRA 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 participant family 51 percent or more of the time.

When more than one applicant or participant family is 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 HRA will make the determination based on available documents such as court orders, or an IRS return showing which family has claimed the child for income tax purposes.

### **3-I.G. FULL-TIME STUDENT [24 CFR 5.603; HCV GB, p. 5-29]**

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 be 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 allowance, and (2) the earned 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 and 5.403, 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 elderly families qualify for the elderly family allowance as described in Chapter 6.

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

#### **Persons with Disabilities**

Under the HCV 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 HRA must make all aspects of the HCV program accessible to persons with disabilities and consider reasonable accommodations requested based upon a person's disability.

#### **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 as described in Chapter 6.

Even though persons with drug or alcohol dependencies are considered persons with disabilities, this does not prevent the HRA from denying assistance for reasons related to alcohol and drug abuse in accordance with the policies found in Part III of this chapter, or from terminating assistance in accordance with the policies in Chapter 12.

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

A *guest* is a person temporarily staying in the unit with the consent of a member of the household who has expressed or implied authority to so consent.

#### HRA Policy

A guest can remain in the assisted unit no longer than 10 consecutive days or a total of 30 cumulative calendar days during any 12-month period.

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 assisted household more than 50 percent of the time, are not subject to the time limitations of guests as described above.

A family may request an exception to this policy for valid reasons (e.g., care of a relative recovering from a medical procedure is expected to last 40 consecutive days). An exception will not be made unless the family can identify and provide documentation of the residence to which the guest will return.

### **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].

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

Foster children and foster adults who are living with an applicant or who have been approved by the HRA to live with a participant 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; HUD-50058 IB, p. 13].

#### HRA 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 their own homes, under some kind of short-term or long-term foster care arrangement with the custodial agency.

A foster child or foster adult may be allowed to reside in the unit if their presence would not result in a violation of HQS space standards according to 24 CFR 982.401.

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 absent from the family, either temporarily or permanently, for a variety of reasons including educational activities, placement in foster care, employment, illness, incarceration, and court order.

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

#### HRA 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. Generally an individual who is or is expected to be absent from the assisted unit and does not provide a date they will return to the household is considered permanently absent and no longer a family member. Exceptions to this general policy are discussed below.

#### **Absent Students**

#### HRA 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 HRA indicating that the student has established a separate household or the family declares that the student has established a separate household.

### **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.

#### HRA Policy

If a child has been placed in foster care, the HRA 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 be counted as a family member.

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

#### HRA 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.

### **Family Members Permanently Confined for Medical Reasons [HCV GB, p. 5-22]**

If a family member is confined to a nursing home or hospital on a permanent basis, that person is no longer considered a family member and the income of that person is not counted [HCV GB, p. 5-22].

#### HRA Policy

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

The HRA will request verification of the family member's permanent absence from a responsible medical professional. If the responsible medical professional cannot provide a determination, the person will be considered temporarily absent. If the family certifies that the family member is confined on a permanent basis, they may present, and the HRA will consider, any additional documentation or evidence.

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

#### HRA Policy

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

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

A *live-in aide* is 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 persons, (2) is not obligated for the support of the persons, and (3) would not be living in the unit except to provide the necessary supportive services [24 CFR 5.403].

The HRA must approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation in accordance with 24 CFR 8, to make the program accessible to and usable by the family member with disabilities.

The income of a live-in aide is not counted in the calculation of annual income for the family [24 CFR 5.609(b)]. Relatives may be approved as live-in aides if they meet all of the criteria defining a live-in aide. Because live-in aides are not *family* members, a relative who serves as a live-in aide would not be considered a remaining member of a tenant family.

#### HRA Policy

A family's request for a live-in aide must be made in writing. Written verification will be required from a reliable, knowledgeable professional, such as a doctor, social worker, or case worker, that the live-in aide is essential for the care and well-being of the elderly, near-elderly, or disabled family member. For continued approval, the family must submit a new, written request-subject to HRA 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.

The HRA will not approve a particular person as a live-in aide, and may withdraw such approval if [24 CFR 982.316(b)]:

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

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

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

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



## PART II: BASIC ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

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

#### Income Limits

HUD establishes income limits for all areas of the country and publishes them annually in the *Federal Register*. They are based upon estimates of median family income with adjustments for family size. The income limits are used to determine eligibility for the program and for income targeting purposes as discussed in this section.

#### Definitions of the Income Limits [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 and 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.

#### Using Income Limits for Eligibility [24 CFR 982.201]

Income limits are used for eligibility only at admission. Income eligibility is determined by comparing the annual income of an applicant to the applicable income limit for their family size. In order to be income eligible, an applicant family must be one of the following:

- A *very low-income* family
- A *low-income* family that has been "continuously assisted" under the 1937 Housing Act. A family is considered to be continuously assisted if the family is already receiving assistance under any 1937 Housing Act program at the time the family is admitted to the HCV program [24 CFR 982.4]

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will consider a family to be continuously assisted if the family was leasing a unit under any 1937 Housing Act program at the time they were selected from the HRA's waiting list.

- A low-income family that qualifies for voucher assistance as a non-purchasing household living in HOPE 1 (public housing homeownership), HOPE 2 (multifamily housing homeownership) developments, or other HUD-assisted multifamily homeownership programs covered by 24 CFR 248.173
- A low-income or moderate-income family that is displaced as a result of the prepayment of a mortgage or voluntary termination of a mortgage insurance contract on eligible low-income housing as defined in 24 CFR 248.101

HUD permits the HRA to establish additional categories of low-income families that may be determined eligible. The additional categories must be consistent with the HRA plan and the consolidated plans for local governments within the HRA's jurisdiction.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA has not established any additional categories of eligible low-income families.

#### **Using Income Limits for Targeting [24 CFR 982.201]**

At least 75 percent of the families admitted to the HRA's program during a HRA fiscal year must be extremely low-income families. HUD may approve exceptions to this requirement if the HRA demonstrates that it has made all required efforts, but has been unable to attract an adequate number of qualified extremely low-income families.

Families continuously assisted under the 1937 Housing Act and families living in eligible low-income housing that are displaced as a result of prepayment of a mortgage or voluntary termination of a mortgage insurance contract are not counted for income targeting purposes.

### **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 HRA'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 as verification of their status. However, HUD regulations permit the HRA to request additional documentation of their status, such as a passport.

#### **HRA Policy**

Family members who declare citizenship or national status will be required to provide additional documentation for verification purposes.

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

In addition to providing a signed declaration, those declaring eligible noncitizen status must sign a verification consent form and cooperate with HRA 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 HRA 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 assistance 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 16 for a discussion of informal hearing procedures.

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

A HRA 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 HRA that the individual or at least one family member is eligible. Verification of eligibility for this purpose occurs when the individual or family members have submitted documentation to the HRA in accordance with program requirements [24 CFR 5.512(a)].

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will not provide assistance to a family before the verification of at least one family member.

When a HRA 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, that the family may be eligible for proration of assistance, and will advise the family of its right to request an appeal to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), or to request an informal hearing with the HRA. The informal hearing with the HRA may be requested in lieu of the USCIS appeal, or 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 informal hearing process.

Informal hearing procedures are contained in Chapter 16.

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

For new occupants joining the assisted family, the HRA 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 HRA 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.

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will verify the citizenship 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 6 has been added to an applicant family within 6 months prior to voucher issuance, an otherwise eligible family may be admitted to the program and must disclose and document the child's SSN within 90 days of the effective date of the initial HAP contract. 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 HRA 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; HCV GB, p. 5-13]**

HUD requires each adult family member, and the head of household, spouse, or cohead, 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 HRA must deny admission to the program if any member of the applicant family fails to sign and submit the consent forms for obtaining information in accordance with 24 CFR 5, Subparts B and F [24 CFR 982.552(b)(3)].

### **3-II.E. STUDENTS ENROLLED IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION [24 CFR 5.612, FR Notice 4/10/06, FR Notice 9/21/16]**

Section 327 of Public Law 109-115 and the implementing regulation at 24 CFR 5.612 established new restrictions on the eligibility of certain students (both part- and full-time) who are enrolled in institutions of higher education.

If a student enrolled at an institution of higher education is under the age of 24, is not a veteran, is not married, does not have a dependent child, and is not a person with disabilities receiving HCV assistance as of November 30, 2005, the student's eligibility must be examined along with the income eligibility of the student's parents. In these cases, both the student and the student's parents must be income eligible for the student to receive HCV assistance. If, however, a student in these circumstances is determined independent from his/her parents in accordance with HRA policy, the income of the student's parents will not be considered in determining the student's eligibility.

The new law does not apply to students who reside with parents who are applying to receive HCV assistance. It is limited to students who are seeking assistance on their own, separately from their parents.

#### **Definitions**

In determining whether and how the new eligibility restrictions apply to a student, the HRA will rely on the following definitions [FR Notice 4/10/06, FR Notice 9/21/16].

#### ***Dependent Child***

In the context of the student eligibility restrictions, *dependent child* means a dependent child of a student enrolled in an institution of higher education. The dependent child must also meet the definition of *dependent* in 24 CFR 5.603, which states that the dependent must be a member of the assisted family, other than the head of household or spouse, who is under 18 years of age, or is a person with a disability, or is a full-time student. Foster children and foster adults are not considered dependents.

## ***Independent Student***

### HRA Policy

The HRA will consider a student “independent” from his or her parents and the parents’ income will not be considered when determining the student’s eligibility if the following four criteria are all met:

The individual is of legal contract age under state law.

The individual has established a household separate from his/her parents for at least one year prior to application for occupancy or the individual meets the U.S. Department of Education’s definition of independent student.

To be considered an *independent student* according to the Department of Education, a student must meet one or more of the following criteria:

The individual is at least 24 years old by December 31 of the award year for which aid is sought

The individual is an orphan, in foster care, or a ward of the court, or was an orphan, in foster care, or ward of the court at any time when the individual was 13 years of age or older

The individual is, or was immediately prior to attaining the age of majority, an emancipated minor or in legal guardianship as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction in the individual’s state of legal residence

The individual is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces or is currently serving on active duty in the Armed Forces for other than training purposes

The individual is a graduate or professional student

The individual is married

The individual has one or more legal dependents other than a spouse (for example, dependent children or an elderly dependent parent)

The individual has been verified during the school year in which the application is submitted as either an unaccompanied youth who is a homeless child or youth, or as unaccompanied, at risk of homelessness, and self-supporting by:

A local educational agency homeless liaison

The director of a program funded under subtitle B of title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act or a designee of the director

A financial aid administrator

The individual is a student for whom a financial aid administrator makes a documented determination of independence by reason of other unusual circumstances

The individual was not claimed as a dependent by his/her parents pursuant to IRS regulations, as demonstrated on the parents' most recent tax forms.

The individual provides a certification of the amount of financial assistance that will be provided by his/her parents. This certification must be signed by the individual providing the support and must be submitted even if no assistance is being provided.

If the HRA determines that an individual meets the definition of a *vulnerable youth* such a determination is all that is necessary to determine that the person is an *independent student* for the purposes of using only the student's income for determining eligibility for assistance.

The HRA will verify that a student meets the above criteria in accordance with the policies in Section 7-II.E.

### ***Institution of Higher Education***

The HRA will use the statutory definition under section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to determine whether a student is attending an *institution of higher education* (see Exhibit 3-2).

### ***Parents***

#### **HRA Policy**

For purposes of student eligibility restrictions, the definition of *parents* includes biological or adoptive parents, stepparents (as long as they are currently married to the biological or adoptive parent), and guardians (e.g., grandparents, aunt/uncle, godparents, etc).

### ***Person with Disabilities***

The HRA will use the statutory definition under section 3(b)(3)(E) of the 1937 Act to determine whether a student is a *person with disabilities* (see Exhibit 3-1).



## ***Veteran***

### HRA Policy

A *veteran* is a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released from such service under conditions other than dishonorable.

## ***Vulnerable Youth***

### HRA Policy

A *vulnerable youth* is an individual who meets the U.S. Department of Education's definition of *independent student* in paragraphs (b), (c), or (h), as adopted in Section II of FR Notice 9/21/16:

The individual is an orHRAn, in foster care, or a ward of the court, or was an orHRAn, in foster care, or ward of the court at any time when the individual was 13 years of age or older

The individual is, or was immediately prior to attaining the age of majority, an emancipated minor or in legal guardianship as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction in the individual's state of legal residence

The individual has been verified during the school year in which the application is submitted as either an unaccompanied youth who is a homeless child or youth, or as unaccompanied, at risk of homelessness, and self-supporting by:

A local educational agency homeless liason

The director of a program funded under subtitle B of title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act or a designee of the director

A financial aid administrator

## **Determining Student Eligibility**

If a student is applying for assistance on his/her own, apart from his/her parents, the HRA must determine whether the student is subject to the eligibility restrictions contained in 24 CFR 5.612. If the student is subject to those restrictions, the HRA must ensure that: (1) the student is individually eligible for the program, (2) either the student is independent from his/her parents or the student's parents are income eligible for the program, and (3) the "family" with which the student is applying is collectively eligible for the program.

### HRA Policy

For any student who is subject to the 5.612 restrictions, the HRA will:

- Follow its usual policies in determining whether the student individually and the student's "family" collectively are eligible for the program

- Determine whether the student is independent from his/her parents in accordance with the definition of *independent student* in this section

- Follow the policies below, if applicable, in determining whether the student's parents are income eligible for the program

If the HRA determines that the student, the student's parents (if applicable), or the student's "family" is not eligible, the HRA will send a notice of denial in accordance with the policies in Section 3-III.F, and the applicant family will have the right to request an informal review in accordance with the policies in Section 16-III.B.

## ***Determining Parental Income Eligibility***

### **HRA Policy**

For any student who is subject to the 5.612 restrictions and who does not satisfy the definition of *independent student* in this section, the HRA will determine the income eligibility of the student's parents as follows:

If the student's parents are married and living together, the HRA will obtain a joint income declaration and certification of joint income from the parents.

If the student's parent is widowed or single, the HRA will obtain an income declaration and certification of income from that parent.

If the student's parents are divorced or separated, the HRA will obtain an income declaration and certification of income from each parent.

If the student has been living with one of his/her parents and has not had contact with or does not know where to contact his/her other parent, the HRA will require the student to submit a certification under penalty of perjury describing the circumstances and stating that the student does not receive financial assistance from the other parent. The HRA will then obtain an income declaration and certification of income from the parent with whom the student has been living or had contact.

In determining the income eligibility of the student's parents, the HRA will use the income limits for the jurisdiction in which the parents live.

## **3-II.F. 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 HRA must search for all household members using the EIV Existing Tenant Search module. The HRA must review the reports for any SSA matches involving another HRA or a multifamily entity and follow up on any issues identified. The HRA 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 HRA, and a match is identified at a multifamily property, the HRA 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.

### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will contact the HRA 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 HRA will only approve assistance contingent upon the move-out from the currently occupied assisted unit.

## **Debts Owed to HRAs 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 HRA must search for each adult family member in the Debts Owed to HRAs and Terminations module.

If a current or former tenant disputes the information in the module, the tenant should contact the HRA directly in writing to dispute the information and provide any documentation that supports the dispute. If the HRA determines that the disputed information is incorrect, the HRA 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.

### HRA Policy

The HRA 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 HRA will search the Debts Owed to HRAs 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 HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA 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 ASSISTANCE**

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

A family that does not meet the eligibility criteria discussed in Parts I and II, must be denied assistance. In this section we will discuss other situations and circumstances in which denial of assistance is mandatory for the HRA, and those in which denial of assistance is optional for the HRA.

While the regulations state that the HRA must prohibit admission for certain types of criminal activity and give the HRA 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, HRAs may not use arrest records as the basis for the denial. Further, HUD does not require the adoption of "One Strike" policies and reminds HRAs 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 HRA violates the Fair Housing Act when their policy or practice has an unjustified discriminatory effect, even when the HRA 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 HRA, or if that interest could be served by another practice that has a less discriminatory effect [OGC Memo 4/4/16].

HRAs 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 HRA 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 HRA 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.

**Forms of Denial [24 CFR 982.552(a)(2); HCV GB, p. 5-35]**

Denial of assistance includes any of the following:

- Not placing the family's name on the waiting list
- Denying or withdrawing a voucher
- Not approving a request for tenancy or refusing to enter into a HAP contract
- Refusing to process a request for or to provide assistance under portability procedures

**Prohibited Reasons for Denial of Program Assistance [24 CFR 982.202(b), 24 CFR 5.2005(b)]**

HUD rules prohibit denial of program assistance to the program based on any of the following criteria:

- Age, disability, race, color, religion, sex, or national origin (See Chapter 2 for additional information about fair housing and equal opportunity requirements.)
- Where a family lives prior to admission to the program
- Where the family will live with assistance under the program. Although eligibility is not affected by where the family will live, there may be restrictions on the family's ability to move outside the HRA's jurisdiction under portability. (See Chapter 10.)
- Whether members of the family are unwed parents, recipients of public assistance, or children born out of wedlock
- Whether the family includes children
- Whether a family decides to participate in a family self-sufficiency program
- Whether or not a qualified applicant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking if the applicant is otherwise qualified for assistance (See section 3-III.G.)

### **3-III.B. MANDATORY DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.553(a)]**

HUD requires the HRA 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 HRA to admit an otherwise-eligible family if the household member has completed a HRA-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).

#### HRA Policy

The HRA 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 HRA is able to verify that the household member who engaged in the criminal activity has completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program approved by the HRA, or the person who committed the crime, is no longer living in the household.

- The HRA determines that any household member is currently engaged in the use of illegal drugs.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will deny assistance if any member of the household is currently engaged in the use of illegal drugs, including medical marijuana. [Memorandum from Sandra B. Henriquez, Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing, 2011, Medical Marijuana Use In Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher Programs]

*Currently engaged in* is defined as any use of illegal drugs during the previous three months unless the applicant is currently enrolled in and fully compliant with treatment.

- The HRA 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.

#### HRA Policy

In determining reasonable cause, the HRA 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 of determining reasonable cause. The HRA 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
- Any household member is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program

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

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

#### **Criminal Activity [24 CFR 982.553]**

HUD permits, but does not require, the HRA to deny assistance if the HRA determines that any household member is currently engaged in, or has engaged in during a reasonable time before the family would receive assistance, certain types of criminal activity.

##### HRA 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 assistance.

*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 right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or persons residing in the immediate vicinity; or

Criminal activity that may threaten the health or safety of property owners, management staff, and persons performing contract administration functions or other responsibilities on behalf of the HRA (including a HRA employee or a HRA contractor, subcontractor, or agent).

*Immediate vicinity* means within a three-block radius of the premises.

Evidence of such criminal activity includes, but is not limited to:

- Any conviction for drug-related or violent criminal activity within the past three years.

- Records of arrests for drug-related or violent criminal activity within the past three years, although 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.

- A conviction for drug-related or violent criminal activity will be given more weight than an arrest for such activity.

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



### **Previous Behavior in Assisted Housing [24 CFR 982.552(c)]**

HUD authorizes the HRA to deny assistance based on the family's previous behavior in assisted housing.

Per the alternative requirements listed in the *Federal Register* notice dated December 29, 2014, HRAs are no longer permitted to deny assistance to a family because the family previously failed to meet its obligations under the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program [FR Notice 12/29/14].

#### HRA Policy

The HRA **will** deny assistance to an applicant family if:

The family does not provide information that the HRA or HUD determines is necessary in the administration of the program.

The family does not provide complete and true information to the HRA.

Any family member has been evicted from federally assisted housing in the last three years.

Any family member has committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program.

The family owes rent or other amounts to any HRA in connection with Section 8 or other public housing assistance under the 1937 Act, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt prior to being selected from the waiting list.

If the family has not reimbursed any HRA for amounts the HRA paid to an owner under a HAP contract for rent, damages to the unit, or other amounts owed by the family under the lease, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt prior to being selected from the waiting list.

The family has breached the terms of a repayment agreement entered into with the HRA, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt covered in the repayment agreement prior to being selected from the waiting list.

A family member has engaged in or threatened violent or abusive behavior toward HRA personnel.

*Abusive or violent behavior towards HRA 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 assistance, the HRA will consider the factors discussed in Section 3-III.E. Upon consideration of such factors, the HRA may, on a case-by-case basis, decide not to deny assistance.

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

#### **Screening for Eligibility**

HRAs are authorized to obtain criminal conviction records from law enforcement agencies to screen applicants for admission to the HCV program. This authority assists the HRA in complying with HUD requirements and HRA 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 HRA must require every applicant family to submit a consent form signed by each adult household member [24 CFR 5.903].

##### HRA Policy

The HRA will perform a criminal background check through local law enforcement for every adult household member.

If the results of the criminal background check indicate that there may be past criminal activity, but the results are inconclusive, the HRA will request a fingerprint card and will request information from the National Crime Information center (NCIC).

While a HRA has regulatory authority to use criminal conviction records for the purpose of applicant screening for admission, there is no corresponding authority to use these records to check for criminal and illegal drug activity by participants, and therefore, HRAs may not use records for this purpose.

HRAs 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 982.553(a)(2)(i)].

##### HRA Policy

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

Additionally, HRAs 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 HRA proposes to deny assistance based on a criminal record or on lifetime sex offender registration information, the HRA 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)].

## **Screening for Suitability as a Tenant [24 CFR 982.307]**

The HRA has no liability or responsibility to the owner for the family's behavior or suitability for tenancy. The HRA has the authority to conduct additional screening to determine whether an applicant is likely to be a suitable tenant.

### HRA Policy

The HRA will not conduct additional screening to determine an applicant family's suitability for tenancy.

The owner is responsible for screening and selection of the family to occupy the owner's unit. The HRA must inform the owner that screening and selection for tenancy is the responsibility of the owner. An owner may consider a family's history with respect to factors such as: 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, and compliance with other essential conditions of tenancy.

HUD requires the HRA to provide prospective owners with the family's current and prior address (as shown in HRA records) and the name and address (if known) of the owner at the family's current and prior addresses. HUD permits the HRA to provide owners with additional information, as long as families are notified that the information will be provided, and the same type of information is provided to all owners.

The HRA may not disclose to the owner any confidential information provided to the HRA by the family in response to a HRA request for documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking except at the written request or with the written consent of the individual providing the documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(a)(4)].

### HRA Policy

The HRA will inform owners of their responsibility to screen prospective tenants, and will provide owners with the required known name and address information, at the time of the initial HQS inspection or before. The HRA will not provide any additional information to the owner, such as tenancy history or criminal history, etc.

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

#### **Evidence [24 CFR 982.553(c)]**

##### HRA Policy

The HRA will use the concept of 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 982.552(c)(2)]**

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

##### HRA Policy

The HRA will 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 assistance 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.G) 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 HRA may obtain the police report associated with the arrest and consider the reported circumstances of the arrest. The HRA 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

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

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

Should the HRA's screening process reveal that an applicant's household includes an individual subject to state lifetime registered sex offender registration, the HRA 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 HRA must deny admission to the family [Notice PIH 2012-28].

For other criminal activity, the HRA may permit the family to exclude the culpable family members as a condition of eligibility. [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)(ii)].

### HRA 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, stay as a guest, or reside in the assisted unit.

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

## **Reasonable Accommodation [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)(iv)]**

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

### HRA Policy

If the family indicates that the behavior of a family member with a disability is the reason for the proposed denial of assistance, the HRA will determine whether the behavior is related to the stated disability. If so, upon the family's request, the HRA will determine whether admitting the family as a reasonable accommodation is appropriate. The HRA will only consider accommodations that can reasonably be expected to address the behavior that is the basis of the proposed denial of assistance. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of reasonable accommodation.

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

If the family is eligible for assistance, the HRA will notify the family in writing and schedule a tenant briefing, as discussed in Chapter 5.

If the HRA determines that a family is not eligible for the program for any reason, the family must be notified promptly. The notice must describe: (1) the reasons for which assistance has been denied, (2) the family's right to an informal review, and (3) the process for obtaining the informal review [24 CFR 982.554 (a)]. See Chapter 16, for informal review policies and procedures.

#### **HRA Policy**

The family will be notified of a decision to deny assistance in writing within 10 business days of the determination.

If a HRA 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 HRA 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)]. The HRA must give the family an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of that record, in the informal review process in accordance with program requirements [24 CFR 982.553(d)].

#### **HRA Policy**

If based on a criminal record or sex offender registration information, an applicant family appears to be ineligible the HRA 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 HRA to dispute the information within that 10-day period, the HRA 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 review process.

Notice requirements related to denying assistance 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.G.

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

The Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) and the HUD regulation at 24 CFR 5.2005(b) prohibit HRAs from denying an applicant admission to the HCV program 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, if the applicant otherwise qualifies for assistance or admission.

Definitions of key terms used in VAWA are provided in section 16-IX of this plan, 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 HRAs to provide applicants who are denied assistance with a VAWA Notice of Occupancy Rights (form HUD-5380) and a domestic violence certification form (HUD-5382) at the time the applicant is denied.

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA 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 HRA's policies.

While the HRA 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 HRA that their status as a victim is directly related to the grounds for the denial. The HRA will request that the applicant provide enough information to the HRA to allow the HRA to make an objectively reasonable determination, based on all circumstances, whether the adverse factor is a direct result of their status as a victim.

The HRA will include in its notice of denial the VAWA information described in section 16-IX.C of this plan as well as including a copy of the form HUD-5382. The HRA will request in writing that an applicant wishing to claim protection under VAWA notify the HRA within 14 business days.



## **Documentation**

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

#### HRA Policy

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

### ***Perpetrator Documentation***

#### HRA 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 assisted unit

Documentation that the perpetrator has successfully completed, or 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.



## 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; *or*

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 phrase:

(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; or
- (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; or
- (c) Has none of the impairments defined in paragraph (1) of this section but is treated by a recipient as having such an impairment.



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EXHIBIT 3-2: DEFINITION OF INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION</b> <b>[20 U.S.C. 1001 and 1002]</b></p>
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**Eligibility of Students for Assisted Housing Under Section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937; Supplementary Guidance; Notice [Federal Register, April 10, 2006]**

*Institution of Higher Education* shall have the meaning given this term in the Higher Education Act of 1965 in 20 U.S.C. 1001 and 1002.

*Definition of “Institution of Higher Education” From 20 U.S.C. 1001*

- (a) Institution of higher education. For purposes of this chapter, other than subchapter IV and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of Title 42, the term “institution of higher education” means an educational institution in any State that
  - (1) Admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;
  - (2) Is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;
  - (3) Provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor’s degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree;
  - (4) Is a public or other nonprofit institution; and
  - (5) Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted preaccreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary for the granting of preaccreditation status, and the Secretary has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.
- (b) Additional institutions included. For purposes of this chapter, other than subchapter IV and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of Title 42, the term “institution of higher education” also includes—
  - (1) Any school that provides not less than a 1-year program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation and that meets the provision of paragraphs (1), (2), (4), and (5) of subsection (a) of this section; and
  - (2) A public or nonprofit private educational institution in any State that, in lieu of the requirement in subsection (a)(1) of this section, admits as regular students persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the institution is located.
- (c) List of accrediting agencies. For purposes of this section and section 1002 of this title, the Secretary shall publish a list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies or associations that the Secretary determines, pursuant to subpart 2 of part G of subchapter IV of this chapter, to be reliable authority as to the quality of the education or training offered.

*Definition of “Institution of Higher Education” From 20 U.S.C. 1002*

(a) Definition of institution of higher education for purposes of student assistance programs

(1) Inclusion of additional institutions. Subject to paragraphs (2) through (4) of this subsection, the term “institution of higher education” for purposes of subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 includes, in addition to the institutions covered by the definition in section 1001 of this title—

(A) A proprietary institution of higher education (as defined in subsection (b) of this section);

(B) A postsecondary vocational institution (as defined in subsection (c) of this section); and

(C) Only for the purposes of part B of subchapter IV of this chapter, an institution outside the United States that is comparable to an institution of higher education as defined in section 1001 of this title and that has been approved by the Secretary for the purpose of part B of subchapter IV of this chapter.

(2) Institutions outside the United States

(A) In general. For the purpose of qualifying as an institution under paragraph (1)(C), the Secretary shall establish criteria by regulation for the approval of institutions outside the United States and for the determination that such institutions are comparable to an institution of higher education as defined in section 1001 of this title (except that a graduate medical school, or a veterinary school, located outside the United States shall not be required to meet the requirements of section 1001 (a)(4) of this title). Such criteria shall include a requirement that a student attending such school outside the United States is ineligible for loans made, insured, or guaranteed under part B of subchapter IV of this chapter unless—

(i) In the case of a graduate medical school located outside the United States—

(I)(aa) At least 60 percent of those enrolled in, and at least 60 percent of the graduates of, the graduate medical school outside the United States were not persons described in section 1091(a)(5) of this title in the year preceding the year for which a student is seeking a loan under part B of subchapter IV of this chapter; and

(bb) At least 60 percent of the individuals who were students or graduates of the graduate medical school outside the United States or Canada (both nationals of the United States and others) taking the examinations administered by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates received a passing score in the year preceding the year for which a student is seeking a loan under part B of subchapter IV of this chapter; or

(II) The institution has a clinical training program that was approved by a State as of January 1, 1992; or



- (ii) In the case of a veterinary school located outside the United States that does not meet the requirements of section 1001(a)(4) of this title, the institution's students complete their clinical training at an approved veterinary school located in the United States.
- (B) Advisory panel
  - (i) In general. For the purpose of qualifying as an institution under paragraph (1)(C) of this subsection, the Secretary shall establish an advisory panel of medical experts that shall—
    - (I) Evaluate the standards of accreditation applied to applicant foreign medical schools; and
    - (II) Determine the comparability of those standards to standards for accreditation applied to United States medical schools.
  - (ii) Special rule if the accreditation standards described in clause (i) are determined not to be comparable, the foreign medical school shall be required to meet the requirements of section 1001 of this title.
- (C) Failure to release information. The failure of an institution outside the United States to provide, release, or authorize release to the Secretary of such information as may be required by subparagraph (A) shall render such institution ineligible for the purpose of part B of subchapter IV of this chapter.
- (D) Special rule. If, pursuant to this paragraph, an institution loses eligibility to participate in the programs under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42, then a student enrolled at such institution may, notwithstanding such loss of eligibility, continue to be eligible to receive a loan under part B while attending such institution for the academic year succeeding the academic year in which such loss of eligibility occurred.
- (3) Limitations based on course of study or enrollment. An institution shall not be considered to meet the definition of an institution of higher education in paragraph (1) if such institution—
  - (A) Offers more than 50 percent of such institution's courses by correspondence, unless the institution is an institution that meets the definition in section 2471 (4)(C) of this title;
  - (B) Enrolls 50 percent or more of the institution's students in correspondence courses, unless the institution is an institution that meets the definition in such section, except that the Secretary, at the request of such institution, may waive the applicability of this subparagraph to such institution for good cause, as determined by the Secretary in the case of an institution of higher education that provides a 2-or 4-year program of instruction (or both) for which the institution awards an associate or baccalaureate degree, respectively;

- (C) Has a student enrollment in which more than 25 percent of the students are incarcerated, except that the Secretary may waive the limitation contained in this subparagraph for a nonprofit institution that provides a 2-or 4-year program of instruction (or both) for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree, or an associate's degree or a postsecondary diploma, respectively; or
  - (D) Has a student enrollment in which more than 50 percent of the students do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and does not provide a 2-or 4-year program of instruction (or both) for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or an associate's degree, respectively, except that the Secretary may waive the limitation contained in this subparagraph if a nonprofit institution demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary that the institution exceeds such limitation because the institution serves, through contracts with Federal, State, or local government agencies, significant numbers of students who do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.
- (4) Limitations based on management. An institution shall not be considered to meet the definition of an institution of higher education in paragraph (1) if—
- (A) The institution, or an affiliate of the institution that has the power, by contract or ownership interest, to direct or cause the direction of the management or policies of the institution, has filed for bankruptcy, except that this paragraph shall not apply to a nonprofit institution, the primary function of which is to provide health care educational services (or an affiliate of such an institution that has the power, by contract or ownership interest, to direct or cause the direction of the institution's management or policies) that files for bankruptcy under chapter 11 of title 11 between July 1, 1998, and December 1, 1998; or
  - (B) The institution, the institution's owner, or the institution's chief executive officer has been convicted of, or has pled nolo contendere or guilty to, a crime involving the acquisition, use, or expenditure of funds under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42, or has been judicially determined to have committed fraud involving funds under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42.
- (5) Certification. The Secretary shall certify an institution's qualification as an institution of higher education in accordance with the requirements of subpart 3 of part G of subchapter IV of this chapter.
- (6) Loss of eligibility. An institution of higher education shall not be considered to meet the definition of an institution of higher education in paragraph (1) if such institution is removed from eligibility for funds under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 as a result of an action pursuant to part G of subchapter IV of this chapter.

(b) Proprietary institution of higher education

- (1) Principal criteria. For the purpose of this section, the term “proprietary institution of higher education” means a school that—
  - (A) Provides an eligible program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation;
  - (B) Meets the requirements of paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1001 (a) of this title;
  - (C) Does not meet the requirement of paragraph (4) of section 1001 (a) of this title;
  - (D) Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association recognized by the Secretary pursuant to part G of subchapter IV of this chapter;
  - (E) Has been in existence for at least 2 years; and
  - (F) Has at least 10 percent of the school’s revenues from sources that are not derived from funds provided under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42, as determined in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary.
- (2) Additional institutions. The term “proprietary institution of higher education” also includes a proprietary educational institution in any State that, in lieu of the requirement in paragraph (1) of section 1001 (a) of this title, admits as regular students persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the institution is located.

(c) Postsecondary vocational institution.

- (1) Principal criteria. For the purpose of this section, the term “postsecondary vocational institution” means a school that—
  - (A) Provides an eligible program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation;
  - (B) Meets the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), (4), and (5) of section 1001 (a) of this title; and
  - (C) Has been in existence for at least 2 years.
- (2) Additional institutions. The term “postsecondary vocational institution” also includes an educational institution in any State that, in lieu of the requirement in paragraph (1) of section 1001 (a) of this title, admits as regular students persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the institution is located.



# EXHIBIT 3-3: MEMORANDUM FROM SANDRA B. HENRIQUEZ, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING, 2011, MEDICAL MARIJUANA USE IN PUBLIC HOUSING AND HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAMS

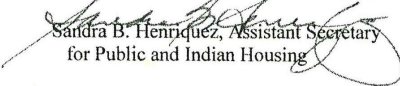


ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR  
PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-5000

February 10, 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR: All Field Offices and Public Housing Agencies (PHAs)

FROM:   
Sandra B. Henriquez, Assistant Secretary  
for Public and Indian Housing

SUBJECT: Medical Marijuana Use In Public Housing  
and Housing Choice Voucher Programs

## Overview

The Department has recently received numerous inquiries regarding the use of medical marijuana<sup>1</sup> in the Public Housing (PH) and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) programs<sup>2</sup>. This memorandum intends to serve as guidance for field offices and PHAs on admissions, continued occupancy, and termination policies in states that have enacted laws that allow the use of medical marijuana. Currently fourteen states (Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington) and the District of Columbia have laws that legalize medical marijuana use.

## New Admissions

Based on federal law, new admissions of medical marijuana users are prohibited into the PH and HCV programs. The Controlled Substances Act (CSA) lists marijuana as a Schedule I drug, a substance with a very high potential for abuse and no accepted medical use in the United States. The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act (QHWRA) of 1998 (42 U.S.C. §13661) requires that PHAs administering the Department's rental assistance programs establish standards and lease provisions that prohibit admission into the PH and HCV programs based on the illegal use of controlled substances, including state legalized medical marijuana. State laws that legalize medical marijuana directly conflict with the admission requirements set forth in QHWRA and are thus subject to federal preemption.

## Current Residents

For existing residents, QHWRA requires PHAs to establish occupancy standards and lease provisions that will allow the PHA to terminate assistance for use of a controlled substance. However, the law does not compel such action and PHAs have discretion to determine continued occupancy policies that are most appropriate for their local communities. PHAs can also determine whether to deny assistance to or terminate individual medical marijuana users, rather than entire households, for both applicant and existing residents when appropriate. PHAs have discretion to determine, on a case-by-case basis, the appropriateness of program termination of existing residents for the use of medical marijuana.

<sup>1</sup> The Department defines medical marijuana as marijuana which, when prescribed by a physician to treat a serious illness such as AIDS, cancer, or glaucoma, is legal under State law.

<sup>2</sup> Housing Choice Voucher programs include tenant-based vouchers and project-based vouchers.

PHAs in states that have enacted laws legalizing the use of medical marijuana must therefore establish a standard and adopt written policy regarding whether or not to allow continued occupancy or assistance for residents who are medical marijuana users. The decision of whether or not to allow continued occupancy or assistance to medical marijuana users is the responsibility of PHAs, not of the Department.

Food and Drug Administration Approved Drugs

PHAs should also be aware that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved drugs for medical uses which are comprised of marijuana synthetics, such as Marinol and Cesamet. These drugs are not medical marijuana and are legal under federal laws. These products have been through the FDA's rigorous approval process and have been determined to be safe and effective for their indications. They are therefore allowed in the public housing and voucher programs.

Thank you for your partnership and participation in the Department's programs, and for your attention to this important issue in providing quality housing and communities for all residents of public housing and voucher programs. Questions regarding this memorandum may be directed to Ms. Diane Yentel at 202-402-6051 or [Diane.E.Yentel@hud.gov](mailto:Diane.E.Yentel@hud.gov).

## Chapter 4

### APPLICATIONS, WAITING LIST AND TENANT SELECTION

#### INTRODUCTION

When a family wishes to receive assistance under the HCV program, the family must submit an application that provides the HRA with the information needed to determine the family's eligibility. HUD requires the HRA to place all families that apply for assistance on a waiting list. When HCV assistance becomes available, the HRA must select families from the waiting list in accordance with HUD requirements and HRA policies as stated in the administrative plan and the annual plan.

The HRA is required to adopt clear policies and procedures for accepting applications, placing families on the waiting list, and selecting families from the waiting list, and must follow these policies and procedures 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 HRA that justify their selection. Examples of this are the selection of families for income targeting and the selection of families that qualify for targeted funding.

HUD regulations require that all families have an equal opportunity to apply for and receive housing assistance, and that the HRA affirmatively further fair housing goals in the administration of the program [24 CFR 982.53, HCV GB p. 4-1]. Adherence to the selection policies described in this chapter ensures that the HRA will be in compliance with all relevant fair housing requirements, as described in Chapter 2.

This chapter describes HUD and HRA policies for taking applications, managing the waiting list and selecting families for HCV assistance. 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 HRA will handle the applications it receives.

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

Part III: Selection for HCV Assistance. This part describes the policies that guide the HRA in selecting families for HCV assistance as such assistance becomes available. It also specifies how in-person interviews will be used to ensure that the HRA has the information needed to make a final eligibility determination.





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

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

This part describes the HRA policies for making applications available, accepting applications making preliminary determinations of eligibility, and the placement of applicants on the waiting list. This part also describes the HRA's obligation to ensure the accessibility of the application process to elderly persons, people with disabilities, and people with limited English proficiency (LEP).

### **4-I.B. APPLYING FOR ASSISTANCE [HCV GB, pp. 4-11 – 4-16, Notice PIH 2009-36]**

Any family that wishes to receive HCV assistance must apply for admission to the program. HUD permits the HRA to determine the format and content of HCV applications, as well how such applications will be made available to interested families and how applications will be accepted by the HRA. The HRA must include Form HUD-92006, Supplement to Application for Federally Assisted Housing, as part of the HRA's application.

#### HRA Policy

Depending upon the length of time that applicants may need to wait to receive assistance, the HRA 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 level of assistance.

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 HRA 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 level of assistance when the family is selected from the waiting list.

Families may complete an online application on the HRA's website when the waiting list is open. The HRA's website is [www.stcloudhra.com](http://www.stcloudhra.com).

Applications will be placed on the waiting list as determined by random lottery, 90% of the applications selected to be placed on the waiting list by random lottery will be families who reside, work or have been hired to work or go to school full-time in the HRA's jurisdiction.

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

##### **Elderly and Disabled Populations [24 CFR 8 and HCV GB, pp. 4-11 – 4-13]**

The HRA must take steps to ensure that the application process is accessible to those people who might have difficulty complying with the normal, standard HRA application process. This could include people with disabilities, certain elderly individuals, as well as persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). The HRA must provide reasonable accommodation to the needs of individuals with disabilities. The application-taking facility and the application process must be fully accessible, or the HRA must provide an alternate approach that provides full access to the application process. Chapter 2 provides a full discussion of the HRA's policies related to providing reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities.

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

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

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

The HRA must review each complete application received and make a preliminary assessment of the family's eligibility. The HRA must accept applications from families for whom the list is open unless there is good cause for not accepting the application (such as denial of assistance) for the grounds stated in the regulations [24 CFR 982.206(b)(2)]. Where the family is determined to be ineligible, the HRA must notify the family in writing [24 CFR 982.201(f)]. Where the family is not determined to be ineligible, the family will be placed on a waiting list of applicants. (That is to say, eligible families will be placed on the waiting list.)

No applicant has a right or entitlement to be listed on the waiting list, or to any particular position on the waiting list [24 CFR 982.202(c)].

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

###### HRA Policy

If an application is not selected in the lottery, the application will not be placed on the waiting list at all.

If the HRA can determine from the information provided that a family is ineligible, the family will not be placed on the waiting list. Where a family is determined to be ineligible, the HRA will send written notification of the ineligibility determination within 10 business days of receiving a complete application. The notice will specify the reasons for ineligibility and will inform the family of its right to request an informal review and explain the process for doing so (see Chapter 16).

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

###### HRA Policy

The confirmation number of applications selected by the random lottery will be published on the HRA website.

Placement on the waiting list does not indicate that the family is, in fact, eligible for assistance. A final determination of eligibility will be made when the family is selected from the waiting list.

Applicants will be placed on the waiting list using a lottery system. Once each application has been randomly assigned a number, the applications will be placed on the waiting list in order of the assigned numbers.



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

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

The HRA must have policies regarding various aspects of organizing and managing the waiting list of applicant families. This includes opening the list to new applicants, closing the list to new applicants, notifying the public of waiting list openings and closings, updating waiting list information, purging the list of families that are no longer interested in or eligible for assistance, as well as conducting outreach to ensure a sufficient number of applicants.

In addition, HUD imposes requirements on how an HRA may structure its waiting list and how families must be treated if they apply for assistance from an HRA that administers more than one assisted housing program.

### **4-II.B. ORGANIZATION OF THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 982.204 and 205]**

The HRA's HCV waiting list must be organized in such a manner to allow the HRA to accurately identify and select families for assistance in the proper order, according to the admissions policies described in this plan.

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

- Applicant name;
- Family unit size;
- Date and time of application;
- Qualification for any local preference;
- Racial or ethnic designation of the head of household.

HUD requires the HRA to maintain a single waiting list for the HCV program unless it serves more than one county or municipality. Such HRAs are permitted, but not required, to maintain a separate waiting list for each county or municipality served.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will maintain a single waiting list for the HCV program.

HUD directs that a family that applies for assistance from the HCV program must be offered the opportunity to be placed on the waiting list for any public housing, project-based voucher or moderate rehabilitation program the HRA operates if 1) the other programs' waiting lists are open, and 2) the family is qualified for the other programs.

HUD permits, but does not require, that HRAs maintain a single merged waiting list for their public housing, Section 8, and other subsidized housing programs.

A family's decision to apply for, receive, or refuse other housing assistance must not affect the family's placement on the HCV waiting list, or any preferences for which the family may qualify.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will not merge the HCV waiting list with the waiting list for any other program the HRA operates.

#### **4-II.C. OPENING AND CLOSING THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 982.206]**

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

An HRA is permitted to close the waiting list if it has an adequate pool of families to use its available HCV assistance. Alternatively, the HRA may elect to continue to accept applications only from certain categories of families that meet particular preferences or funding criteria.

##### HRA Policy

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

The HRA will accept applications solely for referrals for Foster Youth to Independence Initiative (FYI) referrals.

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

If the waiting list has been closed, it cannot be reopened until the HRA publishes a notice in local newspapers of general circulation, minority media, and other suitable media outlets. The notice must comply with HUD fair housing requirements and must specify who may apply, and where and when applications will be received.

##### HRA Policy

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

*St. Cloud Times*

#### **4-II.D. FAMILY OUTREACH [HCV GB, pp. 4-2 to 4-4]**

The HRA must conduct outreach as necessary to ensure that the HRA has a sufficient number of applicants on the waiting list to use the HCV resources it has been allotted.

Because HUD requires the HRA to admit a specified percentage of extremely low-income families to the program (see Chapter 4, Part III), the HRA may need to conduct special outreach to ensure that an adequate number of such families apply for assistance [HCV GB, p. 4-20 to 4-21].

HRA 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
- HRA outreach efforts must be designed to inform qualified families about the availability of assistance 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

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will monitor the characteristics of the population being served and the characteristics of the population as a whole in the HRA'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**

##### HRA Policy

While the family is on the waiting list, the family must immediately inform the HRA of changes in contact information, including current residence, mailing address, and household composition. The changes must be submitted in writing.

#### **4-II.F. UPDATING THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 982.204]**

HUD requires the HRA to establish policies to use when removing applicant names from the waiting list.

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

The decision to withdraw 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 a HRA request for information or updates, and the HRA determines that the family did not respond because of the family member's disability, the HRA must reinstate the applicant family to their former position on the waiting list [24 CFR 982.204(c)(2)].

##### HRA Policy

The waiting list will be updated as needed to ensure that all applicants and applicant information is current and timely.

To update the waiting list, the HRA 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 HRA 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, by email, or by fax. Responses should be postmarked or received by the HRA not later than 30 days from the date of the HRA letter.

If the family fails to respond within 30 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 30 days to respond from the date the letter was re-sent.

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



## **Removal from the Waiting List**

### HRA Policy

If at any time an applicant family is on the waiting list, the HRA determines that the family is not eligible for assistance (see Chapter 3), the family will be removed from the waiting list.

If a family is removed from the waiting list because the HRA has determined the family is not eligible for assistance, 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 review regarding the HRA's decision (see Chapter 16) [24 CFR 982.201(f)].

If at any time the HRA contacts the applicant family via first class mail with program or agency updates and 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 resent to the address indicated.



## **PART III: SELECTION FOR HCV ASSISTANCE**

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

As vouchers become available, families on the waiting list must be selected for assistance in accordance with the policies described in this part.

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

The HRA must maintain a clear record of all information required to verify that the family is selected from the waiting list according to the HRA's selection policies [24 CFR 982.204(b) and 982.207(e)].

### **4-III.B. SELECTION AND HCV FUNDING SOURCES**

#### **Special Admissions [24 CFR 982.203]**

HUD may award funding for specifically-named families living in specified types of units (e.g., a family that is displaced by demolition of public housing; a non-purchasing family residing in a HOPE 1 or 2 projects). In these cases, the HRA may admit such families whether or not they are on the waiting list, and, if they are on the waiting list, without considering the family's position on the waiting list. These families are considered non-waiting list selections. The HRA must maintain records showing that such families were admitted with special program funding.

#### **Targeted Funding [24 CFR 982.204(e)]**

HUD may award an HRA funding for a specified category of families on the waiting list. The HRA must use this funding only to assist the families within the specified category. In order to assist families within a targeted funding category, the HRA may skip families that do not qualify within the targeted funding category. Within this category of families, the order in which such families are assisted is determined according to the policies provided in Section 4-III.C.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA administers the following types of targeted funding:

Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Vouchers  
Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) Program  
Mainstream Vouchers

#### **Regular HCV Funding**

Regular HCV funding may be used to assist any eligible family on the waiting list. Families are selected from the waiting list according to the policies provided in Section 4-III.C.

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

HRAs must describe the method for selecting applicant families from the waiting list, including the system of admission preferences that the HRA will use [24 CFR 982.202(d)].

##### **Local Preferences [24 CFR 982.207; HCV p. 4-16]**

HRAs 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 HRA to establish other local preferences, at its discretion. Any local preferences established must be consistent with the HRA plan and the consolidated plan, and must be based on local housing needs and priorities that can be documented by generally accepted data sources.

##### HRA Policy

The HRA will use the following local preferences:

1. The HRA will offer a preference to any family that has been terminated from its HCV program due to insufficient program funding.
2. The HRA will offer a preference to families that include victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking who is seeking an emergency transfer under VAWA from the HRA's public housing program or other covered housing program operated by the HRA.

The HRA will work with the following partnering service agencies:

##### **Anna Marie's Alliance**

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

3. The HRA will offer a Move-Up Preference to families who are currently participating in a HUD Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program or a Minnesota Long-Term Homelessness (LTH)/High Priority Homelessness (HPH) program. Families must also meet the following criteria:
  - a. Minimum of three years living in PSH, LTH or HPH program
  - b. Has an on-going source of income
    - i. If the income source is employment, the duration of employment must be a minimum of 18 consecutive months
  - c. Has paid rent on time and in full for at least 10 of the past 12 months
  - d. Is in compliance with housing supports provided by the PSH, LTH or HPH program
  - e. Is connected to mainstream or community resources
  - f. Meets all other HCV eligibility criteria

The HRA will first assist families that have been terminated from the HCV program due to insufficient funding and then assist families that qualify for the VAWA preference,

then families that include a person with disabilities who is at least 18 years old and not yet 62 years old, then families who qualify for a Move-Up Preference as outlined above.

## **Income Targeting Requirement [24 CFR 982.201(b)(2)]**

HUD requires that extremely low-income (ELI) families make up at least 75 percent of the families admitted to the HCV program during the HRA's fiscal year. ELI families are those with annual incomes at or below the federal poverty level or 30 percent of the area median income, whichever number is higher. To ensure this requirement is met, an HRA may skip non-ELI families on the waiting list in order to select an ELI family.

Low-income families admitted to the program that are "continuously assisted" under the 1937 Housing Act [24 CFR 982.4(b)], as well as low-income or moderate-income families admitted to the program that are displaced as a result of the prepayment of the mortgage or voluntary termination of an insurance contract on eligible low-income housing, are not counted for income targeting purposes [24 CFR 982.201(b)(2)(v)].

### HRA Policy

The HRA will monitor progress in meeting the income targeting requirement throughout the fiscal year. Extremely low-income families will be selected ahead of other eligible families on an as-needed basis to ensure the income targeting requirement is met.

## **Order of Selection**

The HRA system of preferences may select families based on local preferences according to the date and time of application or by a random selection process (lottery) [24 CFR 982.207(c)]. If a HRA does not have enough funding to assist the family at the top of the waiting list, it is not permitted to skip down the waiting list to a family that it can afford to subsidize when there are not sufficient funds to subsidize the family at the top of the waiting list [24 CFR 982.204(d) and (e)].

### HRA Policy

Families will be selected from the waiting list based on the targeted funding or selection preference(s) for which they qualify, and in accordance with the HRA's hierarchy of preferences, if applicable. Within each targeted funding or preference category, families will be selected in numerical order based on the numbers that were assigned to each application, by lottery, at the time the applications were placed on the waiting list.

Documentation will be maintained by the HRA as to whether families on the list qualify for and are interested in targeted funding. If a higher placed family on the waiting list is not qualified or not interested in targeted funding, there will be a notation maintained so that the HRA does not have to ask higher placed families each time targeted selections are made.

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

When a family has been selected from the waiting list, the HRA must notify the family [24 CFR 982.554(a)].

##### HRA Policy

The HRA will notify the family by first class mail 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

- All documents that must be provided at the interview, including information about what constitutes acceptable documentation

If a notification letter is returned to the HRA with no forwarding address, the family will be removed from the waiting list. A notice of denial (see Chapter 3) will be sent to the family's address of record, as well as to any known alternate address.

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

HUD recommends that the HRA obtain the information and documentation needed to make an eligibility determination through a face-to-face interview with an HRA representative [HCV GB, pg. 4-16]. 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 HRA 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 HRA [Notice PIH 2018-24].

Reasonable accommodation must be made for persons with disabilities who are unable to attend an interview due to their disability.

##### HRA 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 HRA.

The head of household or spouse/cohead must provide acceptable 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 at the time of the interview, he or she will be required to provide it within 10 business days.

Pending disclosure and documentation of social security numbers, the HRA 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 the HRA is issuing vouchers, the HRA will issue a voucher to the next eligible applicant family on the waiting list.

The family must provide the information necessary to establish the family's eligibility and determine the appropriate level of assistance, and must complete required forms, provide required signatures, and submit required documentation. If any materials are missing, the HRA 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 eligible noncitizen status). If the family is unable to obtain the information or materials within the required time frame, the family may request an extension. 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 HRA will provide translation services in accordance with the HRA's LEP plan.

If the family is unable to attend a scheduled interview, the family should contact the HRA in advance of the interview to schedule a new appointment. In all circumstances, if a family does not attend a scheduled interview, the HRA will send another notification letter with a new interview appointment time. Applicants who fail to attend two scheduled interviews without HRA approval will be denied assistance based on the family's failure to supply information needed to determine eligibility. A notice of denial will be issued in accordance with policies contained in Chapter 3.



#### **4-III.F. COMPLETING THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

The HRA must verify all information provided by the family (see Chapter 7). Based on verified information, the HRA must make a final determination of eligibility (see Chapter 3) and must confirm that the family qualified for any special admission, targeted funding admission, or selection preference that affected the order in which the family was selected from the waiting list.

##### **HRA Policy**

If the HRA determines that the family is ineligible, the HRA 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 review (Chapter 16).

If a family fails to qualify for any criteria that affected the order in which it was selected from the waiting list (e.g. targeted funding, extremely low-income), the family will be returned to its original position on the waiting list. The HRA will notify the family in writing that it has been returned to the waiting list, and will specify the reasons for it.

If the HRA determines that the family is eligible to receive assistance, the HRA will invite the family to attend a briefing in accordance with the policies in Chapter 5.



## Chapter 5

### BRIEFINGS AND VOUCHER ISSUANCE

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the briefing and voucher issuance process. When a family is determined to be eligible for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, the HRA must ensure that the family fully understands the way the program operates and the family's obligations under the program. This is accomplished through both an oral briefing and provision of a briefing packet containing the HUD-required documents and other information the family needs to know in order to lease a unit under the program. Once the family is fully informed of the program's requirements, the HRA issues the family a voucher. The voucher includes the unit size for which the family qualifies based on the HRA's subsidy standards, as well as the issue and expiration date of the voucher. The voucher is the document that authorizes the family to begin its search for a unit, and limits the amount of time the family has to successfully locate an acceptable unit.

This chapter describes HUD regulations and HRA policies related to these topics in two parts:

Part I: Briefings and Family Obligations. This part details the program's requirements for briefing families orally, and for providing written materials describing the program and its requirements. It includes a particular focus on the family's obligations under the program.

Part II: Subsidy Standards and Voucher Issuance. This part discusses the HRA's standards for determining how many bedrooms a family of a given composition qualifies for, which in turn affects the amount of subsidy the family can receive. It also discusses the policies that dictate how vouchers are issued, and how long families have to locate a unit.



## **PART I: BRIEFINGS AND FAMILY OBLIGATIONS**

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

HUD regulations require the HRA to conduct mandatory briefings for applicant families who qualify for a voucher. The briefing provides a broad description of owner and family responsibilities, explains the HRA's procedures, and includes instructions on how to lease a unit. This part describes how oral briefings will be conducted, specifies what written information will be provided to families, and lists the family's obligations under the program.

### **5-I.B. BRIEFING [24 CFR 982.301]**

#### **Notification of Briefing**

Prior to issuance of a voucher, the HRA must give the family an oral briefing and provide the family with a briefing packet containing written information about the program. Families may be briefed in individual face-to-face meetings, through group briefing sessions, or via remote briefing sessions.

##### HRA Policy

Families will be notified of their eligibility for assistance at the time they are invited to a briefing. The notice will be sent by first class mail and will also be sent by email if the family has provided a valid email address to the HRA.

The notice will advise the family of the type of briefing, who is required to be present at the briefing, and the date and time of the briefing. The notice will also inform the family of any additional requirements for in-person or remote briefings as addressed in relevant policy elsewhere in this section.

If the notice is returned by the post office with no forwarding address, the applicant will be denied and their name will not be placed back on the waiting list. If the notice is returned by the post office with a forwarding address, the notice will be resent to the address indicated.

#### **In-Person Briefings**

At the briefing, the HRA must ensure effective communication in accordance with Section 504 requirements (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and ensure that the briefing site is accessible to individuals with disabilities. For a more thorough discussion of accessibility requirements, refer to Chapter 2.

##### HRA Policy

In-person briefings will generally be conducted in group meetings. At the family's written request, the HRA may provide an individual briefing.

Generally, all adult family members are required to attend the briefing. If any adult member is unable to attend, the HRA may waive this requirement as long as the head, spouse or co-head attends the briefing.

Families that attend group briefings and still need individual assistance will be referred to an appropriate HRA staff person.

Briefings will be conducted in English. For limited English proficient (LEP) applicants, the HRA will provide interpretation services in accordance with the HRA's LEP plan (See Chapter 2).

### *Attendance*

#### HRA Policy

Applicants who fail to attend a scheduled in-person briefing will be scheduled for another briefing automatically. The HRA will notify the family of the date and time of the second scheduled briefing. Applicants who fail to attend two scheduled briefings, without prior HRA approval, will be denied assistance (see Chapter 3).

### **Remote Briefings [Notice PIH 2020-32]**

Remote briefings may be conducted over the phone, via video conferencing, or through other virtual platforms.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA has the sole discretion to require that briefings be conducted remotely in case of local, state, or national physical distancing orders, and in cases of inclement weather or natural disaster. If the HRA schedules a remote briefing, the HRA will conduct a face-to-face briefing upon request of the applicant as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability if safety and health concerns can be reasonably addressed.

In addition, the HRA will conduct a briefing 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 briefing, or if the applicant believes an in-person briefing would create an undue health risk. The HRA will consider other reasonable requests for a remote briefing on a case-by-case basis.

### **Accessibility Requirements for Persons with Disabilities and LEP Individuals**

As with in-person briefings, the platform for conducting remote briefings must be accessible and the briefing 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.

If no method of conducting a remote briefing is available that appropriately accommodates an individual's disability, the HRA may not hold it against the individual his or her inability to participate in the remote briefing, and the HRA should consider whether postponing the remote briefing 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.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) requirements also apply to remote briefings, 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 briefings.

### **Conducting Remote Briefings**

The HRA must ensure that the lack of technology or inability to use technology for remote briefings does not pose a disadvantage to families that may not be apparent to the HRA. The HRA must ensure that the family has appropriate technological access in order to fully participate in the remote briefing.

#### HRA Policy

At least 10 business days prior to scheduling the remote briefing, the HRA will provide written notification via first class mail and/or email to families participating in the briefing to advise of technological requirements and to request the family notify the HRA of any known barriers. If any family does not respond within five business days, or if the written notification is returned by the post office or the email is rejected, the HRA will contact the family by telephone to identify potential technological barriers and to determine which technology resources are accessible to the family. The HRA 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 briefing or have a one-on-one briefing over the phone, as appropriate.

The HRA will conduct remote briefings via a video conferencing platform when available. If applicants are unable to adequately access the video conferencing platform, the briefing will be conducted by telephone conferencing call-in. If the family is unable to adequately access the telephone conferencing call-in, the remote briefing will be postponed, and an in-person alternative or one-on-one briefing over the phone will be provided.

The HRA will provide login information and/or conferencing call-in information and an electronic copy of the briefing packet via email at least five business days before the briefing. The HRA will provide a paper copy of the briefing packet upon family request, and may reschedule the briefing to allow adequate time for the family to receive the physical briefing packet.

The HRA will ensure that all electronic information stored or transmitted as part of the briefing meets the requirements for accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with LEP, and is secure, including ensuring personally identifiable information (PII) is protected.

The HRA will ensure that families who participate in remote briefings have the opportunity to ask questions as part of the briefing.

If families lose connectivity during any remote briefing or otherwise feel they were unable to access information presented during the briefing, the family may request a one-on-one briefing over the phone or in person with the HRA.

### **Oral Briefing [24 CFR 982.301(a)]**

Each briefing must provide information on the following subjects:

- How the Housing Choice Voucher program works;
- Family and owner responsibilities;
- Where the family can lease a unit, including renting a unit inside or outside the HRA's jurisdiction;
- An explanation of how portability works. The HRA may not discourage the family from choosing to live anywhere in the HRA jurisdiction or outside the HRA jurisdiction under portability, unless otherwise expressly authorized by statute, regulation, PIH Notice, or court order;
- The HRA must inform the family of how portability may affect the family's assistance through screening, subsidy standards, payment standards, and any other elements of the portability process which may affect the family's assistance;
- The advantages of areas that do not have a high concentration of low-income families; and
- For families receiving welfare-to-work vouchers, a description of any local obligations of a welfare-to-work family and an explanation that failure to meet the obligations is grounds for denial of admission or termination of assistance.



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

Documents and information provided in the briefing packet must include the following:

- The term of the voucher, voucher suspensions, and the HRA's policies on any extensions of the term. If the HRA allows extensions, the packet must explain how the family can request an extension.
- A description of the method used to calculate the housing assistance payment for a family, including how the HRA determines the payment standard for a family, how the HRA determines total tenant payment for a family, and information on the payment standard and utility allowance schedule.
- An explanation of how the HRA determines the maximum allowable rent for an assisted unit.
- Where the family may lease a unit and an explanation of how portability works, including information on how portability may affect the family's assistance through screening, subsidy standards, payment standards, and any other elements of the portability process that may affect the family's assistance.
- The HUD-required tenancy addendum, which must be included in the lease.
- The form the family must use to request approval of tenancy, and a description of the procedure for requesting approval for a tenancy.
- A statement of the HRA policy on providing information about families to prospective owners.
- The HRA subsidy standards including when and how exceptions are made.
- Materials (e.g., brochures) on how to select a unit and any additional information on selecting a unit that HUD provides.
- Information on federal, state and local equal opportunity laws and a copy of the housing discrimination complaint form.
- A list of landlords known to the HRA who may be willing to lease a unit to the family or other resources (e.g., newspapers, organizations, online search tools) known to the HRA that may assist the family in locating a unit. HRAs must ensure that the list of landlords or other resources covers areas outside of poverty or minority concentration.
- Notice that if the family includes a person with disabilities, the family may request a list of available accessible units known to the HRA.
- The family obligations under the program, including any obligations of a welfare-to-work family.
- The grounds on which the HRA may terminate assistance for a participant family because of family action or failure to act.
- HRA informal hearing procedures including when the HRA is required to offer a participant family the opportunity for an informal hearing, and how to request the hearing.
- An explanation of the advantages of moving to an area that does not have a high concentration of low-income families.

If the HRA is located in a metropolitan area, the following additional information must be included in the briefing packet in order to receive full points under SEMAP Indicator 7, Expanding Housing Opportunities [24 CFR 985.3(g)]:

- Maps showing areas with housing opportunities outside areas of poverty or minority concentration, both within its jurisdiction and its neighboring jurisdiction
- Information about the characteristics of these areas including job opportunities, schools, transportation, and other services
- An explanation of how portability works, including a list of portability contact persons for neighboring HRAs with names, addresses, and telephone numbers

### **Additional Items to Be Included in the Briefing Packet**

In addition to items required by the regulations, HRAs may wish to include supplemental materials to help explain the program to both participants and owners [HCV GB p. 8-7, Notice PIH 2017-12].

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will provide the following additional materials in the briefing packet:

Summary of items included in the briefing packet

Brochures/materials to explain the Housing Choice Voucher Program to landlords

A description of any HRA policy on security deposits

Information on service organizations

Explanation of any special programs offered by the HRA, such as Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS)

Checklist of items to consider before signing a lease

Contact information for HRA staff

List of items that commonly fail Housing Quality Standard (HQS) inspections

The HUD pamphlet on lead-based paint entitled *Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home*

Information on how to fill out and file a housing discrimination complaint form

The form HUD-5380 domestic violence certification form and the form HUD-5382 notice of occupancy rights, which contains information on VAWA protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking

“Is Fraud Worth It?” (form HUD-1141-OIG), which explains the types of actions a family must avoid and the penalties for program abuse

“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

## **5-I.C. FAMILY OBLIGATIONS**

Obligations of the family are described in the housing choice voucher (HCV) regulations and on the voucher itself. These obligations include responsibilities the family is required to fulfill, as well as prohibited actions. The HRA must inform families of these obligations during the oral briefing, and the same information must be included in the briefing packet. When the family's unit is approved and the HAP contract is executed, the family must meet those obligations in order to continue participating in the program. Violation of any family obligation may result in termination of assistance, as described in Chapter 12.

### **Time Frames for Reporting Changes Required by Family Obligations**

#### HRA Policy

Unless otherwise noted below, when family obligations require the family to respond to a request or notify the HRA of a change, notifying the HRA of the request or change within 10 business days is considered prompt notice.

When a family is required to provide notice to the HRA, the notice must be in writing.

### **Family Obligations [24 CFR 982.551]**

The family obligations of the voucher are listed as follows:

- The family must supply any information that the HRA or HUD determines to be necessary, including submission of required evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status.
- The family must supply any information requested by the HRA or HUD for use in a regularly scheduled reexamination or interim reexamination of family income and composition.
- The family must disclose and verify social security numbers and sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information.
- Any information supplied by the family must be true and complete.
- The family is responsible for any Housing Quality Standards (HQS) breach by the family caused by failure to pay tenant-provided utilities or appliances, or damages to the dwelling unit or premises beyond normal wear and tear caused by any member of the household or guest.

#### HRA Policy

Damages beyond normal wear and tear will be considered to be damages which could be assessed against the security deposit.

- The family must allow the HRA to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice, as described in Chapter 8 of this plan.

- The family must not commit any serious or repeated violation of the lease.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will determine if a family has committed serious or repeated violations of the lease based on available evidence, including but not limited to, a court-ordered eviction or an owner's notice to evict, police reports, and affidavits from the owner, neighbors, or other credible parties with direct knowledge.

*Serious and repeated lease violations* will include, but not be limited to, nonpayment of rent, disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property, living or housekeeping habits that cause damage to the unit or premises, and criminal activity. Generally, the criterion to be used will be whether or not the reason for the eviction was the fault of the tenant or guests. Any incidents of, or criminal activity related to, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking will not be construed as serious or repeated lease violations by the victim [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)].

- The family must notify the HRA and the owner before moving out of the unit or terminating the lease.

#### HRA Policy

The family must comply with lease requirements regarding written notice to the owner. The family must provide written notice to the HRA at least one full rental period before the last day of the tenancy (i.e. one full calendar month plus one day).

- The family must promptly give the HRA a copy of any owner eviction notice.
- The family must use the assisted unit for residence by the family. The unit must be the family's only residence.
- The composition of the assisted family residing in the unit must be approved by the HRA. The family must promptly notify the HRA in writing of the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child. The family must request HRA approval to add any other family member as an occupant of the unit.

#### HRA Policy

The request to add a family member must be submitted in writing and approved prior to the person moving into the unit. The HRA will determine eligibility of the new member in accordance with the policies in Chapter 3.

- The family must promptly notify the HRA in writing if any family member no longer lives in the unit.
- If the HRA has given approval, a foster child or a live-in aide may reside in the unit. The HRA has the discretion to adopt reasonable policies concerning residency by a foster child or a live-in aide, and to define when HRA consent may be given or denied. For policies related to the request and approval/disapproval of foster children, foster adults, and live-in aides, see Chapter 3 (sections I.K and I.M), and Chapter 11 (section II.B).
- The family must not sublease the unit, assign the lease, or transfer the unit.

#### HRA Policy

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.

- The family must supply any information requested by the HRA to verify that the family is living in the unit or information related to family absence from the unit.
- The family must promptly notify the HRA when the family is absent from the unit.

#### HRA Policy

Notice is required under this provision when any family members will be absent from the unit for an extended period. An extended period is defined as any period greater than 30 calendar days. Written notice must be provided to the HRA at least 10 business days prior to the start of the extended absence.

- The family must pay utility bills and provide and maintain any appliances that the owner is not required to provide under the lease [Form HUD-52646, Voucher].
- The family must not own or have any interest in the unit, (other than in a cooperative and owners of a manufactured home leasing a manufactured home space).
- Family members must not commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the program. (See Chapter 14, Program Integrity for additional information).
- Family members must not engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. See Chapter 12 for HUD and HRA policies related to drug-related and violent criminal activity.
- Members of the household must not engage in abuse of alcohol in a way that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. See Chapter 12 for a discussion of HUD and HRA policies related to alcohol abuse.
- An assisted family or member of the family must not receive HCV program assistance while receiving another housing subsidy, for the same unit or a different unit under any other federal, state or local housing assistance program.
- A family must not receive HCV program assistance while residing in a unit owned by a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother of any member of the family, unless the HRA has determined (and has notified the owner and the family of such determination) that approving rental of the unit, notwithstanding such relationship, would provide reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with disabilities. [Form HUD-52646, Voucher]



## **PART II: SUBSIDY STANDARDS AND VOUCHER ISSUANCE**

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

The HRA must establish subsidy standards that determine the number of bedrooms needed for families of different sizes and compositions. This part presents the policies that will be used to determine the family unit size (also known as the voucher size) a particular family should receive, and the policies that govern making exceptions to those standards. The HRA must also establish policies related to the issuance of the voucher, to the voucher term, and to any extensions of the voucher term.

### **5-II.B. DETERMINING FAMILY UNIT (VOUCHER) SIZE [24 CFR 982.402]**

For each family, the HRA determines the appropriate number of bedrooms under the HRA subsidy standards and enters the family unit size on the voucher that is issued to the family. The family unit size does not dictate the size of unit the family must actually lease, nor does it determine who within a household will share a bedroom/sleeping room.

The following requirements apply when the HRA determines family unit size:

- The subsidy standards must provide for the smallest number of bedrooms needed to house a family without overcrowding.
- The subsidy standards must be consistent with space requirements under the housing quality standards.
- The subsidy standards must be applied consistently for all families of like size and composition.
- A child who is temporarily away from the home because of placement in foster care is considered a member of the family in determining the family unit size.
- A family that consists of a pregnant woman (with no other persons) must be treated as a two-person family.
- Any live-in aide (approved by the HRA to reside in the unit to care for a family member who is disabled or is at least 50 years of age) must be counted in determining the family unit size;

- Unless a live-in-aide resides with a family, the family unit size for any family consisting of a single person must be either a zero- or one-bedroom unit, as determined under the HRA subsidy standards.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will assign one bedroom for each two persons within the household, except in the following circumstances:

Children of separate genders will be allocated separate bedrooms when the oldest child reaches the age of 6.

Persons of different generations (other than spouses) will be allocated separate bedrooms.

Foster children will be included in determining unit size only if they will be in the unit for more than 30 days.

Live-in aides will be allocated a separate bedroom.

Single person families will be allocated one bedroom.

The HRA will reference the following chart in determining the appropriate voucher size for a family:

<b>Voucher Size</b>	<b>Persons in Household (Minimum – Maximum)</b>
1 Bedroom	1-2
2 Bedrooms	2-4
3 Bedrooms	3-6
4 Bedrooms	4-8
5 Bedrooms	6-10



## **5-II.C. EXCEPTIONS TO SUBSIDY STANDARDS**

In determining family unit size for a particular family, the HRA may grant an exception to its established subsidy standards if the HRA determines that the exception is justified by the age, sex, health, handicap, or relationship of family members or other personal circumstances [24 CFR 982.402(b)(8)]. Reasons may include, but are not limited to:

- A need for an additional bedroom for medical equipment
- A need for a separate bedroom for reasons related to a family member's disability, medical or health condition

For a single person who is not elderly, disabled, or a remaining family member, an exception cannot override the regulatory limit of a zero or one bedroom [24 CFR 982.402(b)(8)].

### HRA Policy

The HRA will consider granting an exception for any of the reasons specified in the regulation: the age, sex, health, handicap, or relationship of family members or other personal circumstances.

The family must request any exception to the subsidy standards in writing. The request must explain the need or justification for a larger family unit size, and must include appropriate documentation. Requests based on health-related reasons must be verified by a knowledgeable professional source (e.g., doctor or health professional), unless the disability and the disability-related request for accommodation is readily apparent or otherwise known. The family's continued need for an additional bedroom due to special medical equipment must be re-verified at annual reexamination.

The HRA will notify the family of its determination within 10 business days of receiving the family's request and all appropriate documentation. If a participant family's request is denied, the notice will inform the family of their right to request an informal hearing.

## **5-II.D. VOUCHER ISSUANCE [24 CFR 982.302]**

When a family is selected from the waiting list (or as a special admission as described in Chapter 4), or when a participant family wants to move to another unit, the HRA issues a Housing Choice Voucher, form HUD-52646. This chapter deals only with voucher issuance for applicants. For voucher issuance associated with moves of program participants, please refer to Chapter 10.

The voucher is the family's authorization to search for housing. It specifies the unit size for which the family qualifies, and includes both the date of voucher issuance and date of expiration. It contains a brief description of how the program works and explains the family obligations under the program. The voucher is evidence that the HRA has determined the family to be eligible for the program, and that the HRA expects to have money available to subsidize the family if the family finds an approvable unit. However, the HRA does not have any liability to any party by the issuance of the voucher, and the voucher does not give the family any right to participate in the HRA's housing choice voucher program [Voucher, form HUD-52646]

A voucher can be issued to an applicant family only after the HRA has determined that the family is eligible for the program based on verification of information received within the 60 days prior to issuance [24 CFR 982.201(e)] and after the family has attended an oral briefing [HCV 8-1].

### HRA Policy

Vouchers will be issued to eligible applicants immediately following the mandatory briefing.

The HRA should have sufficient funds to house an applicant before issuing a voucher. If funds are insufficient to house the family at the top of the waiting list, the HRA must wait until it has adequate funds before it calls another family from the list [HCV GB p. 8-10].

### HRA Policy

Prior to issuing any vouchers, the HRA will determine whether it has sufficient funding in accordance with the policies in Part VIII of Chapter 16.

If the HRA determines that there is insufficient funding after a voucher has been issued, the HRA may rescind the voucher and place the affected family back on the waiting list.

### HRA Policy

If, due to budgetary constraints, the HRA must rescind vouchers that have already been issued to families, the HRA will do so according to the instruction under each of the categories below. The HRA will first rescind vouchers that fall under Category 1. Vouchers in Category 2 will only be rescinded after all vouchers under Category 1 have been rescinded.

Category 1: Vouchers for which a Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) and proposed lease have not been submitted to the HRA.

Vouchers will be rescinded in order of the date and time they were issued, starting with the most recently issued vouchers.

Category 2: Vouchers for which an RTA and proposed lease have been submitted to the HRA.

Vouchers will be rescinded in order of the date and time the RTA was submitted to the HRA, starting with the most recently submitted requests.

Families who have their voucher rescinded will be notified in writing and will be reinstated to their former position on the waiting list. When funding is again available, families will be selected from the waiting list in accordance with HRA selection policies described in Chapter 4.

## **5-II.E. VOUCHER TERM AND EXTENSIONS**

### **Voucher Term [24 CFR 982.303]**

The initial term of a voucher must be at least 60 calendar days. The initial term must be stated on the voucher [24 CFR 982.303(a)].

#### HRA Policy

The initial voucher term will be 60 calendar days.

The family must submit a Request for Tenancy Approval and proposed lease within the 60-day period unless the HRA grants an extension.

### **Extensions of Voucher Term [24 CFR 982.303(b)]**

The HRA has the authority to grant extensions of search time, to specify the length of an extension, and to determine the circumstances under which extensions will be granted. There is no limit on the number of extensions that the HRA can approve. Discretionary policies related to extension and expiration of search time must be described in the HRA's administrative plan [24 CFR 982.54].

HRAs must approve additional search time if needed as a reasonable accommodation to make the program accessible to and usable by a person with disabilities. The extension period must be reasonable for the purpose.

The family must be notified in writing of the HRA's decision to approve or deny an extension. The HRA's decision to deny a request for an extension of the voucher term is not subject to informal review [24 CFR 982.554(c)(4)].

### HRA Policy

The HRA will approve up to two 30-day extensions upon written request from the family.

The HRA will approve additional extensions only in the following circumstances:

It is necessary as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities.

It is necessary due to reasons beyond the family's control, as determined by the HRA. Following is a list of extenuating circumstances that the HRA may consider in making its decision. The presence of these circumstances does not guarantee that an extension will be granted:

Serious illness or death in the family

Other family emergency

Obstacles due to employment

Whether the family has already submitted requests for tenancy approval that were not approved by the HRA

Whether family size or other special circumstances make it difficult to find a suitable unit

Any request for an additional extension must include the reason(s) an additional extension is necessary. The HRA may require the family to provide documentation to support the request or obtain verification from a qualified third party.

All requests for extensions to the voucher term must be made in writing and submitted to the HRA prior to the expiration date of the voucher (or extended term of the voucher).

The HRA will decide whether to approve or deny an extension request within 10 business days of the date the request is received, and will provide the family written notice of its decision.

### **Suspensions of Voucher Term [24 CFR 982.303(c)]**

The HRA must provide for suspension of the initial or any extended term of the voucher from the date the family submits a request for HRA approval of the tenancy until the date the HRA notifies the family in writing whether the request has been approved or denied.

### **Expiration of Voucher Term**

Once a family's housing choice voucher term (including any extensions) expires, the family is no longer eligible to search for housing under the program. If the family still wishes to receive assistance, the HRA may require that the family reapply, or may place the family on the waiting list with a new application date but without requiring reapplication. Such a family does not become ineligible for the program on the grounds that it was unable to locate a unit before the voucher expired [HCV GB p. 8-13].

#### HRA Policy

If an applicant family's voucher term or extension expires before the HRA has approved a tenancy, the HRA will require the family to reapply for assistance.

Within 10 business days after the expiration of the voucher term or any extension, the HRA will notify the family in writing that the voucher term has expired and that the family must reapply when the waiting list is open in order to be placed on the waiting list.

## Chapter 6

### INCOME AND SUBSIDY DETERMINATIONS

[24 CFR Part 5, Subparts E and F; 24 CFR 982]

#### INTRODUCTION

A family's income determines eligibility for assistance and is also used to calculate the family's payment and the HRA's subsidy. The HRA will use the policies and methods described in this chapter to ensure that only eligible families receive assistance and that no family pays more or less than its obligation under the regulations. This chapter describes HUD regulations and HRA 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 HRA policies for calculating annual income are found in Part I.
- Part II: Adjusted Income. Once annual income has been established HUD regulations require the HRA to subtract from annual income any of five mandatory deductions for which a family qualifies. These requirements and HRA policies for calculating adjusted income are found in Part II.
- Part III: Calculating Family Share and HRA Subsidy. This part describes the statutory formula for calculating total tenant payment (TTP), the use of utility allowances, and the methodology for determining HRA subsidy and required family payment.





## 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 for Persons with Disabilities (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 plan, 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(c)(2)].
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].

### HRA 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. Generally, an individual who is or is expected to be absent from the assisted unit with no anticipated return date is considered permanently absent and no longer a family member. Exceptions to this general policy are discussed below.

## ***Absent Students***

### HRA 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 HRA indicating that the student has established a separate household or the family declares that the student has established 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].

### HRA Policy

If a child has been placed in foster care, the HRA 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 be counted as a family member.

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

### HRA 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.

## **Family Members Permanently Confined for Medical Reasons**

If a family member is confined to a nursing home or hospital on a permanent basis, that person is no longer considered a family member and the income of that person is not counted [HCV GB, p. 5-22].

### HRA Policy

The HRA 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.

When an individual who has been counted as a family member is determined permanently absent, the family is eligible for the medical expense deduction only if the remaining head, spouse, or cohead qualifies as an elderly person or a person with disabilities.

## **Joint Custody of Dependents**

### HRA 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 participant family 51 percent or more of the time.

When more than one applicant or participant family is 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 HRA will make the determination based on available documents such as court orders, school records, or an IRS return showing which family has claimed the child for income tax purposes.

## **Caretakers for a Child**

### HRA Policy

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

- (1) If a responsible agency has determined that another adult is to be brought into the assisted 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.
- (2) 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 HRA will extend the caretaker's status as an eligible visitor.
- (3) At any time that custody or guardianship legally has been awarded to a caretaker, the housing choice voucher will be transferred to the caretaker.
- (4) 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.

## **6-I.C. ANTICIPATING ANNUAL INCOME**

The HRA 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 HRA generally will use current circumstances to determine anticipated income for the coming 12-month period. HUD authorizes the HRA 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 HRA believes that past income is the best available indicator of expected future income [24 CFR 5.609(d)]

HRAs 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 HRAs to use tenant-provided documents (pay stubs) 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 HRA does not determine it is necessary to obtain additional third-party data.

### **HRA Policy**

When EIV is obtained and the family does not dispute the EIV employer data, the HRA will use current tenant-provided documents to project annual income. When the tenant-provided documents are pay stubs, the HRA will make every effort to obtain current and consecutive pay stubs dated within the last 60 days.

The HRA 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 HRA determines additional information is needed.

In such cases, the HRA 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 HRA annualized projected income.

When the HRA cannot readily anticipate income based upon current circumstances (e.g., in the case of seasonal employment, unstable working hours, or suspected fraud), the HRA 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 HRA to show why the historic pattern does not represent the family's anticipated income.

### ***Known Changes in Income***

If the HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA'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 60 days of the reexamination interview date.

### **Projecting Income**

In HUD's EIV webcast of January 2008, HUD made clear that HRAs 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***

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 [24 CFR 5.609(b)(1)].

#### HRA Policy

For persons who regularly receive bonuses or commissions, the HRA will verify and then average amounts received for the two years preceding admission or reexamination. If only a one-year history is available, the HRA will use the prior year amounts. In either case the family may provide, and the HRA will consider, 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 HRA 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. Sporadic income includes temporary payments from the U.S. Census Bureau for employment lasting no longer than 180 days [Notice PIH 2009-19].

#### HRA 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***

Employment income earned by children (including foster children) under the age of 18 years is not included in annual income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(1)]. (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***

Income from some federal programs is specifically excluded from consideration as income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(17)], 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***

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 HRA 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 HRA's governing board. No resident may receive more than one such stipend during the same period of time [24 CFR 5.600(c)(8)(iv)].

### ***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)].

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA 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 to the HRA in writing within 10 business days of the date participation ended.

### ***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.

#### **HRA 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 for persons with disabilities is discussed in section 6-I.E below.

## **6-I.E. EARNED INCOME DISALLOWANCE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES [24 CFR 5.617; Streamlining Final Rule (SFR) Federal Register 3/8/16]**

The earned income disallowance (EID) encourages people with disabilities 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 5.617 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 HCV 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 is a person with disabilities and 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 who is a person with disabilities and 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 is a person with disabilities and 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 the 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.

#### HRA 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 HRA must exclude at least 50 percent of any increase in income attributable to employment or increased earnings.

#### HRA Policy

During the second 12-month exclusion period, the HRA will exclude 50 percent of any increase in income attributable to new employment or increased earnings.

During the 24-month eligibility period, the HRA will schedule and conduct an interim reexamination each time there is a change in the family member's annual income that affects or is affected by the EID (e.g., when the family member's income falls to a level at or below his/her baseline income, when one of the exclusion periods ends, and at the end of the lifetime maximum eligibility period).

### ***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 begin to receive assistance from a different housing agency, move between public housing and Section 8 assistance, or have breaks in assistance.

## **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].

#### HRA Policy

To determine business expenses that may be deducted from gross income, the HRA will use current applicable Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules for determining allowable business expenses [see IRS Publication 535], unless a topic is addressed by HUD regulations or guidance as described below.

### **Business Expansion**

HUD regulations do not permit the HRA to deduct from gross income expenses for business expansion.

#### HRA 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 HRA to deduct from gross income the amortization of capital indebtedness.

#### HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA 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.

### HRA Policy

Acceptable investments in a business include cash loans and contributions of assets or equipment. For example, if a member of an assisted family provided an up-front loan of \$2,000 to help a business get started, the HRA 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**

### HRA 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); 24 CFR 5.603(b)]**

### **Overview**

There is no asset limitation for participation in the HCV program. However, HUD requires that the HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA can take into consideration past rental income along with the prospects of obtaining a new tenant.

#### **HRA Policy**

Anytime 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 HRA 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 HRA 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.

### **HRA 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].

## ***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 HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA.

- Note: The HUD field office no longer provides an interest rate for imputed asset income. The "safe harbor" is now for the HRA to establish a passbook rate within 0.75 percent of a national average.
- The HRA must review its passbook rate annually to ensure that it remains within 0.75 percent of the national average.

### **HRA Policy**

The HRA initially set the imputed asset passbook rate at the national rate established by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).

The HRA will review the passbook rate annually. The rate will not be adjusted unless the current HRA 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.

The effective date of changes to the passbook rate will be determined at the time of the review.

### ***Determining Actual Anticipated Income from Assets***

It may or may not be necessary for the HRA 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."

#### **HRA Policy**

If an asset is owned by more than one person and any family member has unrestricted access to the asset, the HRA 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.

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 HRA will prorate the asset according to the percentage of ownership. If no percentage is specified or provided for by state or local law, the HRA 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 HRA 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 *HCV Guidebook* permits the HRA to set a threshold below which assets disposed of for less than fair market value will not be counted [HCV GB, p. 5-27].

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA 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.

#### **HRA 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***

#### **HRA 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 HRA may verify the value of the assets disposed of if other information available to the HRA 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.

#### HRA Policy

In determining the value of checking account and savings accounts, the HRA will use the current balance.

In determining the anticipated income from an interest-bearing checking or savings account, the HRA 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.

#### HRA Policy

In determining the market value of an investment account, the HRA 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 HRA 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].

#### **HRA Policy**

In determining the equity, the HRA will determine market value by viewing the local assessment role of the owner's most recent property tax liability bill.

The HRA 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 HRA 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)]
- The value of a home currently being purchased with assistance under the HCV program Homeownership Option for the first 10 years after the purchase date of the home [24 CFR 5.603(b), Notice PIH 2012-3]
- Equity in owner-occupied cooperatives and manufactured homes in which the family lives [HCV GB, p. 5-25]
- 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 HRA 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 minus the balance of the loan (mortgage) minus the expenses to convert to cash [Notice PIH 2012-3].

#### **HRA Policy**

For the purposes of calculating expenses to convert to cash for real property, the HRA 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.

### HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA 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].

#### **HRA Policy**

In determining the value of personal property held as an investment, the HRA will use the family's estimate of the value. The HRA may obtain an appraisal to confirm the value of the asset 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)].

#### **HRA Policy**

Necessary personal property consists of only those items not held as an investment, and 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)].

#### **HRA Policy**

When a delayed-start payment is received and reported during the period in which the HRA is processing an annual reexamination, the HRA will adjust the family share and HRA subsidy 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 HRA.

### **Treatment of Overpayment Deductions from Social Security Benefits**

The HRA 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 HRA must use the reduced benefit amount after deducting only the amount of the overpayment withholding from the gross benefit amount [Notice PIH 2018-24].



## Periodic Payments Excluded from Annual Income

- Payments received for the care of foster children or foster adults (usually persons with disabilities, unrelated to the assisted family, who are unable to live alone) [24 CFR 5.609(c)(2)]. Kinship guardianship assistance payments (Kin-GAP) and other similar guardianship payments are treated the same as foster care payments and are likewise excluded from annual income [Notice PIH 2012-1].

### HRA Policy

The HRA 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 CFR 5.609(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 HRA 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 receiving HCV assistance 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 HRA must include in annual income “imputed” welfare income. The HRA 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)].

#### ***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 an assisted family.

### **Alimony and Child Support**

The HRA must count alimony or child support amounts awarded as part of a divorce or separation agreement.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will count court-awarded amounts for alimony and child support unless the HRA 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.

### **Regular Contributions or Gifts**

The HRA must count as income regular monetary and nonmonetary contributions or gifts from persons not residing with an assisted family [24 CFR 5.609(b)(7)]. Temporary, nonrecurring, or sporadic income and gifts are not counted [24 CFR 5.609(c)(9)].

#### HRA 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 HRA. For contributions that may vary from month to month (e.g., utility payments), the HRA will include an average amount based upon past history.

#### **6-I.L. STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 5.609(b)(9); Notice PIH 2015-21]**

In 2005, Congress passed a law (for Section 8 programs only) requiring that certain student financial assistance be included in annual income. Prior to that, the full amount of student financial assistance was excluded. For some students, the full exclusion still applies.

#### **Student Financial Assistance Included in Annual Income [24 CFR 5.609(b)(9); FR 4/10/06; Notice PIH 2015-21]**

The regulation requiring the inclusion of certain student financial assistance applies only to students who satisfy all of the following conditions:

- They are enrolled in an institution of higher education, as defined under the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965.
- They are seeking or receiving Section 8 assistance on their own—that is, apart from their parents—through the HCV program, the project-based voucher program, or the moderate rehabilitation program.
- They are under 24 years of age **OR** they have no dependent children.

For students who satisfy these three conditions, any financial assistance in excess of tuition and any other required fees and charges received: (1) under the 1965 HEA, (2) from a private source, or (3) from an institution of higher education, as defined under the 1965 HEA, must be included in annual income.

To determine annual income in accordance with the above requirements, the HRA will use the definitions of *dependent child*, *institution of higher education*, and *parents* in section 3-II.E, along with the following definitions [FR 4/10/06, pp. 18148-18150]:

- *Assistance under the Higher Education Act of 1965* includes Pell Grants, Federal Supplement Educational Opportunity Grants, Academic Achievement Incentive Scholarships, State Assistance under the Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership Program, the Robert G. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program, and Federal Work Study programs.
- *Assistance from private sources* means assistance from nongovernmental sources, including parents, guardians, and other persons not residing with the student in an HCV assisted unit.
- *Tuition and fees* are defined in the same manner in which the Department of Education defines *tuition and fees* [Notice PIH 2015-21].
  - This is the amount of tuition and required fees covering a full academic year most frequently charged to students.
  - The amount represents what a typical student would be charged and may not be the same for all students at an institution.
  - If tuition is charged on a per-credit-hour basis, the average full-time credit hour load for an academic year is used to estimate average tuition.
  - Required fees include all fixed-sum charges that are required of a large proportion of all students. Examples include, but are not limited to, writing and science lab fees and fees specific to the student's major or program (i.e., nursing program).
  - Expenses related to attending an institution of higher education must **not** be included as tuition. Examples include, but are not limited to, room and board, books, supplies, meal plans, transportation and parking, student health insurance plans, and other non-fixed-sum charges.

#### **Student Financial Assistance Excluded from Annual Income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(6)]**

Any student financial assistance not subject to inclusion under 24 CFR 5.609(b)(9) is fully excluded from annual income under 24 CFR 5.609(c)(6), whether it is paid directly to the student or to the educational institution the student is attending. This includes any financial assistance received by:

- Students residing with parents who are seeking or receiving Section 8 assistance
- Students who are enrolled in an educational institution that does **not** meet the 1965 HEA definition of *institution of higher education*
- Students who are over 23 **AND** have at least one dependent child, as defined in section 3-II.E
- Students who are receiving financial assistance through a governmental program not authorized under the 1965 HEA.

## 6-I.M. ADDITIONAL EXCLUSIONS FROM ANNUAL INCOME

Other exclusions contained in 24 CFR 5.609(c) that have not been discussed earlier in this chapter include the following:

- Reimbursement of medical expenses [24 CFR 5.609(c)(4)]
- 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 sub marginal 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 Orange* 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 1965j, 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 and mandatory fees 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) (See Section 6-I.L. for exceptions.)
- (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 organizations
- (aa) Distributions from an ABLE account, and actual or imputed interest on the ABLE account balance



## PART II: ADJUSTED INCOME

### 6-II.A. INTRODUCTION

#### Overview

HUD regulations require HRAs 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 [HRA] 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.

#### Anticipating Expenses

##### HRA Policy

Generally, the HRA 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 non-school periods and cyclical medical expenses), the HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA 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.”

#### HRA 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	Psychiatric treatment
Surgery and medical procedures that are necessary, legal, non-cosmetic	Ambulance services and some costs of transportation related to medical expenses
Services of medical facilities	The cost and care of necessary equipment related to a medical condition (e.g., eyeglasses/lenses, hearing aids, crutches, and artificial teeth)
Hospitalization, long-term care, and in-home nursing services	Cost and continuing care of necessary service animals
Prescription medicines and insulin, but <u>not</u> nonprescription medicines even if recommended by a doctor	Medical insurance premiums or the cost of a health maintenance organization (HMO)
Improvements to housing directly related to medical needs (e.g., ramps for a wheel chair, handrails)	
Substance abuse treatment programs	
<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**

### HRA 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 HRA 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.

#### HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA determines that the disability assistance expenses enable more than one family member to work, the expenses will be capped by the sum of the family members’ incomes.

## **Eligible Disability Expenses**

Examples of auxiliary apparatus are provided in the *HCV Guidebook* as follows: “Auxiliary apparatus are items such as wheelchairs, ramps, adaptations to vehicles, or special equipment to enable a blind person to read or type, 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 HRAs to further define and describe auxiliary apparatus [VG, p. 30].

### ***Eligible Auxiliary Apparatus***

#### HRA 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.

### ***Eligible Attendant Care***

The family determines the type of attendant care that is appropriate for the person with disabilities.

#### HRA 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 HRA 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 assistance expenses may be deducted for payments to a member of an assisted family [24 CFR 5.603(b)]. However, expenses paid to a relative who is not a member of the assisted 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.

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA determines the reasonableness of the expenses based on typical costs of care or apparatus in the locality. To establish typical costs, the HRA will collect information from organizations that provide services and support to persons with disabilities. A family may present, and the HRA 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**

#### **HRA Policy**

This policy applies only to families in which the head or spouse 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 HRA 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.”

### **Clarifying the Meaning of *Child* for This Deduction**

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 [HCV GB, p. 5-29].

### **Qualifying for the Deduction**

#### ***Determining Who Is Enabled to Pursue an Eligible Activity***

##### HRA 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 HRA 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***

##### HRA 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 HRA.

## ***Furthering Education***

### **HRA 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***

### **HRA 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 with disabilities 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 HRA 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].

### **HRA 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 HRA 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 assisted family. The HRA 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***

#### HRA 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 HRA 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.

#### HRA 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 HRA will use the schedule of child care costs from a qualified local entity that either subsidizes child care costs or licenses child care providers. Families may present, and the HRA will consider, justification for costs that exceed typical costs in the area.

## **PART III: CALCULATING FAMILY SHARE AND HRA SUBSIDY**

### **6-III.A. OVERVIEW OF RENT AND SUBSIDY CALCULATIONS**

#### **TTP Formula [24 CFR 5.628]**

HUD regulations specify the formula for calculating the total tenant payment (TTP) for an assisted 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 HRA

The HRA has authority to suspend and exempt families from minimum rent when a financial hardship exists, as defined in section 6-III.B.

The amount that a family pays for rent and utilities (the family share) will never be less than the family's TTP but may be greater than the TTP depending on the rent charged for the unit the family selects.

#### ***Welfare Rent [24 CFR 5.628]***

##### HRA Policy

Welfare rent does not apply in this locality.

#### ***Minimum Rent [24 CFR 5.630]***

##### HRA Policy

The minimum rent for this locality is \$50.

#### **Family Share [24 CFR 982.305(a)(5)]**

If a family chooses a unit with a gross rent (rent to owner plus an allowance for tenant-paid utilities) that exceeds the HRA's applicable payment standard: (1) the family will pay more than the TTP, and (2) at initial occupancy the HRA may not approve the tenancy if it would require the family share to exceed 40 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income. The income used for this determination must have been verified no earlier than 60 days before the family's voucher was issued. (For a discussion of the application of payment standards, see section 6-III.C.)

### **HRA Subsidy [24 CFR 982.505(b)]**

The HRA will pay a monthly housing assistance payment (HAP) for a family that is equal to the lower of (1) the applicable payment standard for the family minus the family's TTP or (2) the gross rent for the family's unit minus the TTP. (For a discussion of the application of payment standards, see section 6-III.C.)

### **Utility Reimbursement [24 CFR 982.514(b); 982.514(c)]**

When the HRA subsidy for a family exceeds the rent to owner, the family is due a utility reimbursement. HUD permits the HRA to pay the reimbursement to the family or directly to the utility provider.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will make utility reimbursements directly to the utility provider.

The HRA may make all utility reimbursement payments to qualifying families on a monthly basis or may make quarterly payments when the monthly reimbursement amount is \$15.00 or less. Reimbursements must be made once per calendar-year quarter and must be prorated if the family leaves the program in advance of its next quarterly reimbursement. The HRA must also adopt hardship policies for families for whom receiving quarterly reimbursement would create a financial hardship.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will issue all utility reimbursements monthly.

## **6-III.B. FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS AFFECTING MINIMUM RENT [24 CFR 5.630]**

### **Overview**

If the HRA establishes a minimum rent greater than zero, the HRA 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 HRA determines that a hardship exists, the family share 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.

#### HRA 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.

#### HRA Policy

For a family to qualify under this provision, the cause of the potential eviction must be the family's failure to pay rent to the owner 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.

HRA 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 HRA.

HRA Policy

The HRA has not established any additional hardship criteria.

**Implementation of Hardship Exemption**

***Determination of Hardship***

When a family requests a financial hardship exemption, the HRA must suspend the minimum rent requirement beginning the first of the month following the family's request.

The HRA then determines whether the financial hardship exists and whether the hardship is temporary or long-term.

HRA Policy

The HRA 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.

When the minimum rent is suspended, the family share 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 HRA has established a minimum rent of \$50.	
<b>Family Share – No Hardship</b>	<b>Family Share – 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
\$50 Minimum rent	\$50 Minimum rent
Minimum rent applies. TTP = \$50	Hardship exemption granted. TTP = \$15

HRA 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 HRA will make the determination of hardship within 30 calendar days.



### ***No Financial Hardship***

If the HRA determines there is no financial hardship, the HRA will reinstate the minimum rent and require the family to repay the amounts suspended.

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will require the family to repay the suspended amount within 30 calendar days of the HRA's notice that a hardship exemption has not been granted.

### ***Temporary Hardship***

If the HRA determines that a qualifying financial hardship is temporary, the HRA must suspend the minimum rent for the 90-day period beginning the first of the month following the date of the family's request for a hardship exemption.

At the end of the 90-day suspension period, the family must resume payment of the minimum rent and must repay the HRA the amounts suspended. HUD requires the HRA to offer a reasonable repayment agreement, on terms and conditions established by the HRA. The HRA also may determine that circumstances have changed and the hardship is now a long-term hardship.

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will enter into a repayment agreement in accordance with the procedures found in Chapter 16 of this plan.

### ***Long-Term Hardship***

If the HRA determines that the financial hardship is long-term, the HRA 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.

#### **HRA 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. APPLYING PAYMENT STANDARDS [24 CFR 982.505; 982.503(b)]**

#### **Overview**

The HRA's schedule of payment standards is used to calculate housing assistance payments for HCV families. This section covers the application of the HRA's payment standards. The establishment and revision of the HRA's payment standard schedule are covered in Chapter 16.

*Payment standard* is defined as "the maximum monthly assistance payment for a family assisted in the voucher program (before deducting the total tenant payment by the family)" [24 CFR 982.4(b)].

The payment standard for a family is the lower of (1) the payment standard for the family unit size, which is defined as the appropriate number of bedrooms for the family under the HRA's subsidy standards [24 CFR 982.4(b)], or (2) the payment standard for the size of the dwelling unit rented by the family.

If the HRA has established an exception payment standard for a designated part of a zip code area or FMR area and a family's unit is located in the exception area, the HRA must use the appropriate payment standard for the exception area.

The HRA is required to pay a monthly housing assistance payment (HAP) for a family that is the lower of (1) the payment standard for the family minus the family's TTP or (2) the gross rent for the family's unit minus the TTP.

If during the term of the HAP contract for a family's unit, the owner lowers the rent, the HRA will recalculate the HAP using the lower of the initial payment standard or the gross rent for the unit [HCV GB, p. 7-8].

#### **Changes in Payment Standards**

When the HRA revises its payment standards during the term of the HAP contract for a family's unit, it will apply the new payment standards in accordance with HUD regulations.

#### ***Decreases***

If an HRA changes its payment standard schedule, resulting in a lower payment standard amount, during the term of a HAP contract, the HRA is not required to reduce the payment standard used to calculate subsidy for families under HAP contract as long as the HAP contract remains in effect [FR Notice 11/16/16].

However, if the HRA does choose to reduce the payment standard for families currently under HAP contract, the initial reduction to the payment standard may not be applied any earlier than the effective date of the family's second regular reexamination following the effective date of the decrease in the payment standard amount. At that point, the HRA may either reduce the payment standard to the current amount in effect on the HRA's payment standard schedule, or may reduce the payment standard to another amount that is higher than the normally applicable amount on the schedule. The HRA may also establish different policies for designated areas within their jurisdiction (e.g., different zip code areas).

In any case, the HRA must provide the family with at least 12 months' notice that the payment standard is being reduced before the effective date of the change. The HRA's policy on decreases in the payment standard during the term of the HAP contract apply to all families under HAP contract at the time of the effective date of the decrease in the payment standard within the designated area.

#### HRA Policy

When the payment standard schedule is decreased during the term of the HAP contract, the PHA will determine the payment standard for families currently under a HAP contract as follows:

**Step 1:** At the first regular reexamination following the decrease in the payment standard, the PHA will determine the payment standard for the family using the lower of the payment standard for the family unit size or the size of the dwelling unit rented by the family.

**Step 2:** The PHA will compare the payment standard from Step 1 to the payment standard last used to calculate the monthly housing assistance payment for the family. The payment standard used by the PHA at the first regular reexamination following the decrease in the payment standard will be the higher of these two payment standards. The PHA will advise the family that the application of the lower payment standard will be deferred until the second regular reexamination following the effective date of the decrease in the payment standard.

**Step 3:** At the second regular reexamination following the decrease in the payment standard, the lower payment standard will be used to calculate the monthly housing assistance payment for the family unless the PHA has subsequently increased the payment standard, in which case the payment standard will be determined in accordance with procedures for increases in payment standards.

The HRA will not establish different policies for decreases in the payment standard for designated areas within their jurisdiction.

#### ***Increases***

If the payment standard is increased during the term of the HAP contract, the increased payment standard will be used to calculate the monthly housing assistance payment for the family beginning on the effective date of the family's first regular reexamination on or after the effective date of the increase in the payment standard.

Families requiring or requesting interim reexaminations will not have their HAP payments calculated using the higher payment standard until their next annual reexamination [HCV GB, p. 7-8].

#### ***Changes in Family Unit Size (Voucher Size)***

Irrespective of any increase or decrease in the payment standard, if the family unit size increases or decreases during the HAP contract term, the new family unit size must be used to determine the payment standard for the family beginning at the family's first regular reexamination following the change in family unit size.

**Reasonable Accommodation**

If a family requires a higher payment standard as a reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with disabilities, the HRA is allowed to establish a higher payment standard for the family of not more than 120 percent of the published FMR.

## **6-III.D. APPLYING UTILITY ALLOWANCES [24 CFR 982.517]**

### **Overview**

An HRA-established utility allowance schedule is used in determining family share and HRA subsidy. A family's utility allowance is determined by the size of dwelling unit leased by a family or the voucher unit size for which the family qualifies using HRA subsidy standards, whichever is the lowest of the two. See Chapter 5 for information on the HRA's subsidy standards.

For policies on establishing and updating utility allowances, see Chapter 16.

### **Reasonable Accommodation**

HCV program regulations require an HRA to approve a utility allowance amount higher than shown on the HRA's schedule if a higher allowance is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a family member with a disability. For example, if a family member with a disability requires such an accommodation, the HRA will approve an allowance for air-conditioning, even if the HRA has determined that an allowance for air-conditioning generally is not needed.

The family must request the higher allowance and provide the HRA with an explanation of the need for the reasonable accommodation and information about the amount of additional allowance required [HCV GB, p. 18-8].

### **Utility Allowance Revisions**

At reexamination, the HRA must use the current utility allowance schedule [HCV GB, p. 18-8].

#### HRA Policy

Revised utility allowances will be applied to a family's rent and subsidy calculations at the first annual reexamination that is effective after the allowance is adopted.

### **6-III.E. PRORATED ASSISTANCE 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 HRA must prorate the assistance provided to a mixed family. The HRA will first determine assistance as if all family members were eligible and then prorate the assistance based upon the percentage of family members that actually are eligible. For example, if the HRA subsidy for a family is calculated at \$500 and two of four family members are ineligible, the HRA subsidy would be reduced to \$250.

## 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.

(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).

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<sup>1</sup> Text of 45 CFR 260.31 follows.



(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 HRA 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 HRA'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 HRAs and housing owners identifying the benefits that qualify for this exclusion. Updates will be published and distributed when necessary. [See Section 6-I.M. 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, HRAs 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.



## EXHIBIT 6-4: EARNED INCOME DISALLOWANCE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

### 24 CFR 5.617 Self-sufficiency incentives for persons with disabilities—Disallowance of increase in annual income.

*(a) Applicable programs.* The disallowance of earned income provided by this section is applicable only to the following programs: HOME Investment Partnerships Program (24

CFR part 92); Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (24 CFR part 574); Supportive Housing Program (24 CFR part 583); and the Housing Choice Voucher Program (24 CFR part 982).

*(b) 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 with disabilities (who is a member of a qualified family).

*Disallowance.* Exclusion from annual income.

*Previously unemployed* includes a person with disabilities 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 housing assisted under one of the programs listed in paragraph (a) of this section or receiving tenant-based rental assistance under one of the programs listed in paragraph (a) of this section.

(1) Whose annual income increases as a result of employment of a family member who is a person with disabilities and who was previously unemployed for one or more years prior to employment;

(2) Whose annual income increases as a result of increased earnings by a family member who is a person with disabilities during participation in any economic self-sufficiency or other job training program; or

(3) Whose annual income increases, as a result of new employment or increased earnings of a family member who is a person with disabilities, 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 responsible entity 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.

*(c) Disallowance of increase in annual income—*

*(1) Initial twelve-month exclusion.* During the 12-month period beginning on the date a member who is a person with disabilities of a qualified family is first employed or the family first experiences an increase in annual income attributable to employment, the responsible entity must exclude from annual income (as defined in the regulations governing the applicable program listed in paragraph (a) of this section) of a qualified family any increase in income of the family member who is a person with disabilities as a result of employment over prior income of that family member.

*(2) Second twelve-month exclusion and phase-in.* Upon expiration of the 12-month period defined in paragraph (c)(1) of this section and for the subsequent 12-month period, the responsible entity must exclude from annual income of a qualified family 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 who is a person with disabilities as provided in paragraph (c)(1) or (c)(2) of this section is limited to a lifetime 24-month period. The disallowance applies for a maximum of 12 months for disallowance under paragraph (c)(1) of this section and a maximum of 12 months for disallowance under paragraph (c)(2) of this section, during the 24-month period starting from the initial exclusion under paragraph (c)(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 (see 24 CFR parts 0 to 199, revised as of April 1, 2016).

*(d) Inapplicability to admission.* The disallowance of increases in income as a result of employment of persons with disabilities under this section does not apply for purposes of admission to the program (including the determination of income eligibility or any income targeting that may be applicable).



## 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 HRA 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 HRA, the welfare agency will inform the HRA 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 HRA of any subsequent changes in the term or amount of such specified welfare benefit reduction. The HRA 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 HRA'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 HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA decision.*

(1) Public housing. If a public housing tenant claims that the HRA has not correctly calculated the amount of imputed welfare income in accordance with HUD requirements, and if the HRA denies the family's request to modify such amount, the HRA shall give the tenant written notice of such denial, with a brief explanation of the basis for the HRA determination of the amount of imputed welfare income. The HRA notice shall also state that if the tenant does not agree with the HRA determination, the tenant may request a grievance hearing in accordance with part 966, subpart B of this title to review the HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA denies the family's request to modify such amount, the HRA shall give the family written notice of such denial, with a brief explanation of the

basis for the HRA determination of the amount of imputed welfare income. Such notice shall also state that if the family does not agree with the HRA determination, the family may request an informal hearing on the determination under the HRA hearing procedure.

*(e) HRA relation with welfare agency.*

(1) The HRA must ask welfare agencies to inform the HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA. However, the HRA 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 HRA shall be entitled to rely on the welfare agency notice to the HRA of the welfare agency's

determination of a specified welfare benefits  
reduction.



## **Chapter 7**

### **VERIFICATION**

[24 CFR 982.516, 24 CFR 982.551, 24 CFR 5.230, Notice PIH 2018-18]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The HRA 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 HRA must not pass on the cost of verification to the family.

The HRA will follow the verification guidance provided by HUD in Notice PIH 2018-18 and any subsequent guidance issued by HUD. This chapter summarizes those requirements and provides supplementary HRA 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 of the HRA.



## **PART I: GENERAL VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

### **7-I.A. FAMILY CONSENT TO RELEASE OF INFORMATION [24 CFR 982.516 AND 982.551, 24 CFR 5.230]**

The family must supply any information that the HRA or HUD determines is necessary to the administration of the program and must consent to HRA verification of that information [24 CFR 982.551].

#### **Consent Forms**

It is required that all adult applicants and participants 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 HRA 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 HRA will deny admission to applicants and terminate assistance of participants. The family may request an informal review (applicants) or informal hearing (participants) in accordance with HRA procedures.

## **7-I.B. OVERVIEW OF VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

### **HUD's Verification Hierarchy [Notice PIH 2018-18]**

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 HRA to use the most reliable form of verification that is available and to document the reasons when the HRA uses a lesser form of verification.

In order of priority, the forms of verification that the HRA 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 participant)
- 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**

#### HRA Policy

Any documents used for verification generally must be dated within 60 days of the HRA request. The documents must not be damaged, altered or in any way illegible.

Print-outs from Web pages are considered original documents.

Any family self-certifications must be made on the HRA's Self-Certification Affidavit and must be signed in the presence of a HRA staff or notary public.



## **File Documentation**

The HRA 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 HRA has followed all of the verification policies set forth in this plan. The record should be sufficient to enable a staff member or HUD reviewer to understand the process followed and conclusions reached.

### HRA Policy

The HRA 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 adjusted income

When the HRA is unable to obtain third-party verification, the HRA will document in the family file the reason that third-party verification was not available [24 CFR 982.516(a)(2); Notice PIH 2018-18].

## **7-I.C. UP-FRONT INCOME VERIFICATION (UIV)**

Up-front income verification (UIV) refers to the HRA'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 HRA.

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 HRA has independently verified the UIV information and the family has been granted an opportunity to contest any adverse findings through the informal review/hearing process of the HRA.

See Chapter 6 for the HRA's policy on the use of UIV/EIV to project annual income.

## **Upfront Income Verification Using HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System (Mandatory)**

HRAs 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. The 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 and IVT Reports***

The data shown on income and income validation tool (IVT) reports is updated quarterly. Data may be between 3 and 6 months old at the time reports are generated.

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will obtain income and IVT reports for annual reexaminations on a monthly basis. Reports will be generated as part of the regular reexamination process.

Income and IVT 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 and IVT 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 and IVT reports will be retained in participant files with the applicable annual or interim reexamination documents.

When the HRA determines through EIV 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 14, Program Integrity.

### ***EIV Identity Verification***

The EIV system verifies tenant identities against SSA records. These records are compared to PIC data for a match on social security number, name, and date of birth.

HRAs are required to use EIV's *Identity Verification Report* on a monthly basis to improve the availability of income information in EIV [Notice PIH 2018-18].

When identity verification for a participant fails, a message will be displayed within the EIV system and no income information will be displayed.

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will identify participants whose identity verification has failed by reviewing EIV's *Identity Verification Report* on a monthly basis.

The HRA will attempt to resolve PIC/SSA discrepancies by obtaining appropriate documentation from the participant. When the HRA determines that discrepancies exist due to HRA errors such as spelling errors or incorrect birth dates, the errors will be corrected promptly.

### **Upfront Income Verification Using Non-HUD Systems (Optional)**

In addition to mandatory use of the EIV system, HUD encourages HRAs to utilize other upfront verification sources.

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will inform all applicants and participants of its use of the following UIV resources during the admission and reexamination process:

HUD's EIV system

## **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 HRA by the family. If written third-party verification is not available, the HRA 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 2018-18]**

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 HRA is required to obtain, at minimum, two current and consecutive pay stubs for determining annual income from wages.

The HRA 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.

#### HRA Policy

Third-party documents provided by the family must be dated within 60 days of the HRA request date.

If the HRA determines that third-party documents provided by the family are not acceptable, the HRA will explain the reason to the family and request additional documentation.

As verification of earned income, the HRA will require the family to provide consecutive pay stubs for the most current 60 days of full pay periods prior to the HRA request date. At the HRA's discretion, if additional paystubs are needed due to the family's circumstances (e.g., sporadic income, fluctuating schedule, etc.), the HRA may request additional paystubs or a payroll record.

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

When upfront verification is not available and the family is unable to provide written third-party documents, the HRA 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.

HRAs may mail, fax, or email third-party written verification form requests to third-party sources.

### HRA Policy

The HRA 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 HRA.

## **Oral Third-Party Verification [Notice PIH 2018-18]**

For third-party oral verification, HRAs 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.

HRAs 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.

### HRA Policy

In collecting third-party oral verification, HRA 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 HRA 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 2018-18]**

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.

#### HRA Policy

If the family cannot provide original documents, the HRA 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***

HUD permits HRAs to accept a self-certification from a family as verification of assets disposed of for less than fair market value [HCV GB, p. 5-28].

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will accept a self-certification from a family as verification of assets disposed of for less than fair market value.

### ***Value of Assets and Asset Income [24 CFR 982.516(a)]***

For families with net assets totaling \$5,000 or less, the HRA may accept the family's declaration of asset value and anticipated asset income. However, the HRA is required to obtain third-party verification of all assets regardless of the amount during the intake process and at least every three years thereafter.

#### HRA Policy

For families with net assets totaling \$5,000 or less, the HRA will accept the family's self-certification of the value of family assets and anticipated asset income when applicable. The family's declaration must show each asset and the amount of income expected from that asset. All family members 18 years of age and older must sign the family's declaration.

The HRA will use third-party documentation for assets as part of the intake process, whenever a family member is added to verify the individual's assets, and 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 HRA is unable to obtain third-party verification.

Self-certification, however, is an acceptable form of verification when:

- A source of income is fully excluded
- Net family assets total \$5,000 or less and the HRA has adopted a policy to accept self-certification at annual recertification, when applicable
- The HRA has adopted a policy to implement streamlined annual recertifications for fixed sources of income (See Chapter 11)

When the HRA 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.

### HRA 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 HRA.

The HRA 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 on the HRA’s Self-Certification Affidavit 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 HRA staff or notary public.





## PART II: VERIFYING FAMILY INFORMATION

### 7-II.A. VERIFICATION OF LEGAL IDENTITY

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will require families to furnish verification of legal identity for each household member.

Verification of Legal Identity for Adults	Verification of Legal Identity for Children
Certificate of birth, naturalization papers Church issued baptismal certificate Current, valid driver's license or Department of Motor Vehicles identification card Veteran ID Card (VIC) U.S. military discharge (DD 214) Current U.S. passport Current government employer identification card with picture Green Card (formerly known as a Permanent Resident Card)	Certificate of birth Adoption papers Custody agreement Health and Human Services ID Certified school records Hospital Birth Record Green Card (formerly known as a Permanent Resident Card)

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 HRA'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 HRA and be signed in the presence of a HRA representative or HRA notary public.

Legal identity will be verified for all applicants at the time of eligibility determination and in cases where the HRA has reason to doubt the identity of a person representing him or herself to be a participant.

## **7-II.B. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS [24 CFR 5.216, Notice PIH 2018-24]**

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 program participants who were at least 62 years of age as of January 31, 2010, and had not previously disclosed an SSN.

Note that an individual who previously declared to have eligible immigration status may not change his or her declaration for the purpose of avoiding compliance with the SSN disclosure and documentation requirements or penalties associated with noncompliance with these requirements. Nor may the head of household opt to remove a household member from the family composition for this purpose.

The HRA 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 HRA may only reject documentation of an SSN provided by an applicant or participant if the document is not an original document or if the original document has been altered, mutilated, is illegible, or appears to be forged.

### HRA Policy

The HRA will explain to the applicant or participant the reasons the document is not acceptable and request that the individual obtain and submit acceptable documentation of the SSN to the HRA within 90 days.

In the case of Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy (SRO) individuals, the required documentation must be provided within 90 calendar days from the date of admission into the program. The HRA must grant one additional 90-day extension if it determines that the applicant's failure to comply was due to circumstances that were beyond the applicant's control and could not have been reasonably foreseen.

### HRA Policy

The HRA will grant one additional 90-day extension if needed for reasons 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 the individual fails to comply with SSN disclosure and documentation requirements upon expiration of the provided time period, the HRA will terminate the individual's assistance.

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 voucher issuance, an otherwise eligible family may be admitted to the program and the family must provide documentation of the child's SSN within 90 days of the effective date of the initial HAP contract. A 90-day extension will be granted if the HRA determines that the participant's failure to comply was due to unforeseen circumstances and was outside of the participant's control.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA 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 participant requests to add a new household member who is at least 6 years of age, or who is under the age of 6 and has an SSN, the participant 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 HRA may not add the new household member until such documentation is provided.

When a participant requests to add a new household member who is under the age of 6 and has not been assigned an SSN, the participant 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 HRA determines that the participant's failure to comply was due to unforeseen circumstances and was outside of the participant's control. During the period the HRA is awaiting documentation of the SSN, the child will be counted as part of the assisted household.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will grant one additional 90-day extension if needed for reasons 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.

Social security numbers must be verified only once during continuously-assisted occupancy.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will verify each disclosed SSN by:

- Obtaining documentation from applicants and participants 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 HRA 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.

#### HRA Policy

Once an individual's status is classified as "verified" in HUD's EIV system, the HRA will retain 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.

#### HRA Policy

If an official record of birth or evidence of social security retirement benefits cannot be provided, the HRA 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 program participants 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.

#### HRA 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**

#### HRA Policy

Certification by the head of household is normally sufficient verification. If the HRA has reasonable doubts about a marital relationship, the HRA will require the family to document the marriage.

A marriage certificate generally is required to verify that a 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**

### HRA Policy

Certification by the head of household is normally sufficient verification. If the HRA has reasonable doubts about a separation or divorce, the HRA will require the family to provide documentation of the divorce or separation.

A certified copy of a divorce decree, signed by a court officer, is required to document that a couple is divorced.

A copy of a court-ordered maintenance or other court record is required to document a separation.

If no court document is available, documentation from a community-based agency will be accepted.

## **Absence of Adult Member**

### HRA Policy

If an adult member who was formerly a member of the household is reported to be permanently absent, the family must remove the adult from their dwelling lease and 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**

### HRA 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**

### **General Requirements**

#### HRA Policy

The HRA 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 reports full-time student status for an adult other than the head, spouse, or cohead.

The family reports child care expenses to enable a family member to further his or her education.

The family includes a student enrolled in an *institution of higher education*.

### **Restrictions on Assistance to Students Enrolled in Institutions of Higher Education**

This section applies only to students who are seeking assistance on their own, separately from their parents. It does not apply to students residing with parents who are seeking or receiving HCV assistance.

#### HRA Policy

In accordance with the verification hierarchy described in section 7-1.B, the HRA will determine whether the student is exempt from the restrictions in 24 CFR 5.612 by verifying any one of the following exemption criteria:

The student is enrolled at an educational institution that does not meet the definition of *institution of higher education* in the Higher Education Act of 1965 (see section Exhibit 3-2).

The student is at least 24 years old.

The student is a veteran, as defined in section 3-II.E.

The student is married.

The student has at least one dependent child, as defined in section 3-II.E.

The student is a person with disabilities, as defined in section 3-II.E, and was receiving assistance prior to November 30, 2005.

If the HRA cannot verify at least one of these exemption criteria, the HRA will conclude that the student is subject to the restrictions on assistance at 24 CFR 5.612. In addition to verifying the student's income eligibility, the HRA will then proceed to verify either the student's parents' income eligibility (see section 7-III.J) or the student's independence from his/her parents (see below).

## ***Independent Student***

### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will verify a student's independence from his/her parents to determine that the student's parents' income is not relevant for determining the student's eligibility by doing all of the following:

Either reviewing and verifying previous address information to determine whether the student has established a household separate from his/her parents for at least one year, or reviewing and verifying documentation relevant to determining whether the student meets the U.S. Department of Education's definition of *independent student* (see section 3-II.E)

Reviewing the student's prior year income tax returns to verify the student is independent or verifying the student meets the U.S. Department of Education's definition of *independent student* (see section 3-II.E)

Requesting and obtaining written certification directly from the student's parents identifying the amount of support they will be providing to the student, even if the amount of support is \$0, except in cases in which the HRA determines that the student is a *vulnerable youth* (see section 3-II.E)

## **7-II.F. DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITY**

The HRA must verify the existence of a disability in order to allow certain income disallowances and deductions from income. The HRA is not permitted to inquire about the nature or extent of a person's disability [24 CFR 100.202(c)]. The HRA may not inquire about a person's diagnosis or details of treatment for a disability or medical condition. If the HRA receives a verification document that provides such information, the HRA will not place this information in the tenant file. Under no circumstances will the HRA request a participant's medical record(s). For more information on health care privacy laws, see the Department of Health and Human Services' website at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/>.

The above cited regulation does not prohibit the following inquiries, provided these inquiries are made 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
- Inquiring whether an applicant for a dwelling is a current illegal abuser or addict of a controlled substance
- Inquiring whether an applicant has been convicted of the illegal manufacture or distribution of a controlled substance

## **Family Members Receiving SSA Disability Benefits**

Verification of the receipt of disability benefits from the Social Security Administration (SSA) is sufficient verification of disability for the purpose of qualifying for waiting list preferences (if applicable) or certain income disallowances and deductions [VG, p. 23].

### HRA Policy

For family members claiming disability who receive disability benefits from the SSA, the HRA will attempt to obtain information about disability benefits through the HUD Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system. If documentation from HUD's EIV System is not available, the HRA will request a current (dated within the last 60 days) SSA benefit verification letter from each family member claiming disability status. If the family is unable to provide the document(s), the HRA will ask the family to request a benefit verification letter by either calling SSA at 1-800-772-1213, or by requesting it from [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov). Once the applicant or participant receives the benefit verification letter they will be required to provide it to the HRA.

## **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.

### HRA Policy

For family members claiming disability who do not receive disability benefits 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. A detailed discussion of eligibility requirements is in the Eligibility chapter. This verifications chapter discusses HUD and HRA 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 HRA may request verification of the declaration by requiring presentation of a birth certificate, United States passport or other appropriate documentation.

#### HRA Policy

Family members who claim U.S. citizenship or national status will not be required to provide additional documentation unless the HRA 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.

### ***HRA 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 plan. No further verification of eligible immigration status is required.

For family members under the age of 62 who claim to be eligible immigrants, the HRA must verify immigration status with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

The HRA will follow all USCIS protocols for verification of eligible immigration status.

## **7-II.H. VERIFICATION OF PREFERENCE STATUS**

The HRA must verify any preferences claimed by an applicant that determined placement on the waiting list.

### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will offer a preference to any family that has been terminated from its HCV program due to insufficient program funding. The HRA will verify this preference using the HRA's termination records.

The HRA also offers a preference for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, as described in Section 4-III.C. To verify that applicants qualify for the preference, the HRA will follow documentation requirements outlined in Section 16-IX.D.

## **PART III: VERIFYING INCOME AND ASSETS**

Chapter 6, Part I of this plan 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 HRA policies that supplement the general verification procedures specified in Part I of this chapter.

### **7-III.A. EARNED INCOME**

#### **Tips**

##### HRA 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**

##### HRA Policy

For wages other than tips, the family must provide the most current 60 days of consecutive pay stubs.

### **7-III.B. BUSINESS AND SELF EMPLOYMENT INCOME**

##### HRA 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.

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 HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA 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 sources of income, please see Chapter 11.

#### **Social Security/SSI Benefits**

##### HRA Policy

To verify the SS/SSI benefits of applicants, the HRA will request a current (dated within the last 60 days) SSA benefit verification letter from each family member that receives social security benefits. If the family is unable to provide the document(s), the HRA will help the applicant request a benefit verification letter from SSA's Web site at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) or ask the family to request one by calling SSA at 1-800-772-1213. Once the applicant has received the benefit verification letter they will be required to provide it to the HRA.

To verify the SS/SSI benefits of participants, the HRA will obtain information about social security/SSI benefits through the HUD EIV System, and confirm with the participant(s) that the current listed benefit amount is correct. If the participant disputes the EIV-reported benefit amount, or if benefit information is not available in HUD systems, the HRA will request a current SSA benefit verification letter from each family member that receives social security benefits. If the family is unable to provide the document(s) the HRA will help the participant request a benefit verification letter from SSA's Web site at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) or ask the family to request one by calling SSA at 1-800-772-1213. Once the participant has received the benefit verification letter they will be required to provide it to the HRA.

### 7-III.D. ALIMONY OR CHILD SUPPORT

#### HRA Policy

The methods the HRA 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:

Copies of the receipts and/or payment stubs for 3 full months prior to HRA request

Third-party verification form/statement from the state or local child support enforcement agency for 3 full months prior to the HRA request

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 HRA needs to verify only those certifications that warrant documentation [HCV GB, p. 5-28].

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will verify the value of assets disposed of only if:

The HRA 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 participant reported a \$10,000 certificate of deposit at the last annual reexamination and the HRA verified this amount. Now the person reports that she has given this \$10,000 to her son. The HRA 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 HRA will verify the value of this asset.

## **7-III.F. NET INCOME FROM RENTAL PROPERTY**

#### HRA 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 HRA 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**

### HRA Policy

The HRA 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 HRA 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 6 months from the effective date of the examination.

*Upon* retirement, the HRA 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 HRA will accept an original document from the entity holding the account dated no earlier than 12 months 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 HRA 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].

HRAs 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, HRAs have the option of requiring additional verification.

For partially excluded income, the HRA **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).

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will accept the family's self-certification as verification of fully excluded income. The HRA may request additional documentation if necessary to document the income source.

The HRA 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**

#### HRA Policy

The HRA 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, and earnings are not being received by families claiming to have zero annual income.



### **7-III.J. STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE [Notice PIH 2015-21]**

Any financial assistance, in excess of amounts received for tuition, fees, and other required charges that a person attending an institution of higher education receives under the Higher Education Act of 1965, from private sources, or from an institution of higher education must be considered income unless the student is over the age of 23 with dependent children or is residing with parents who are seeking or receiving HCV assistance [24 CFR 5.609(b)(9) and FR 4/10/06].

For students over the age of 23 with dependent children or students residing with parents who are seeking or receiving HCV assistance, the full amount of student financial assistance is excluded from annual income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(6)]. The full amount of student financial assistance is also excluded for students attending schools that do not qualify as institutions of higher education (as defined in Exhibit 3-2). Excluded amounts are verified only if, without verification, the HRA would not be able to determine whether or to what extent the income is to be excluded (see section 7-III.H).

#### HRA Policy

For a student subject to having a portion of his/her student financial assistance included in annual income in accordance with 24 CFR 5.609(b)(9), the HRA will request written third-party verification of both the source and the amount. Family-provided documents from the educational institution attended by the student will be requested, as well as documents generated by any other person or entity providing such assistance, as reported by the student.

In addition, the HRA will request written verification of the student's tuition, fees, and other required charges.

If the HRA is unable to obtain third-party written verification of the requested information, the HRA will pursue other forms of verification following the verification hierarchy in section 7-I.B.

### **7-III.K. PARENTAL INCOME OF STUDENTS SUBJECT TO ELIGIBILITY RESTRICTIONS**

If a student enrolled at an institution of higher education is under the age of 24, is not a veteran, is not married, does not have a dependent child, and is not a person with disabilities receiving HCV assistance as of November 30, 2005, the income of the student's parents must be considered when determining income eligibility, unless the student is determined independent from his or her parents or a *vulnerable youth* in accordance with HRA policy [24 CFR 5.612, FR Notice 4/10/06, p. 18146, and FR Notice 9/21/16].

This provision does not apply to students residing with parents who are seeking or receiving HCV assistance. It is limited to students who are seeking or receiving assistance on their own, separately from their parents.

#### HRA Policy

If the HRA is required to determine the income eligibility of a student's parents, the HRA will request an income declaration and certification of income from the appropriate parent(s) (as determined in section 3-II.E). The HRA will send the request directly to the parents, who will be required to certify to their income under penalty of perjury. The parents will be required to submit the information directly to the HRA. The required information must be submitted (postmarked) within 10 business days of the date of the HRA's request or within any extended timeframe approved by the HRA.

The HRA reserves the right to request and review supporting documentation at any time if it questions the declaration or certification. Supporting documentation may include, but is not limited to, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax returns, consecutive and original pay stubs, bank statements, pension benefit statements, benefit award letters, and other official and authentic documents from a federal, state, or local agency.

## **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 HRA 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 HRA must 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 Eligibility chapter for a definition of elderly and disabled families and Chapter 6 (6-II.C.) for a discussion of the deduction. The HRA must 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**

#### HRA Policy

Medical expenses will be verified through:

Written third-party documents provided by the family, such as pharmacy printouts or receipts.

The HRA will make a best effort to determine what expenses from the past are likely to continue to occur in the future. The HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA must 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 HRA'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.

HRA 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**HRA Policy

When anticipated costs are related to on-going payment of medical bills incurred in past years, the HRA 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

## **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***

##### HRA Policy

The HRA will accept written third-party documents provided by the family.

If family-provided documents are not available, the HRA 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***

##### HRA 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 verification is not possible, written family certification of estimated apparatus costs for the upcoming 12 months.

In addition, the HRA 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 HRA will verify that the expense is incurred for a person with disabilities (See 7-II.F.).

### **Family Member(s) Permitted to Work**

The HRA must verify that the expenses claimed actually enable a family member, or members, (including the person with disabilities) to work.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA 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.

#### HRA 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 of this chapter. In addition, the HRA 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 HRA 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.

##### HRA Policy

The family (and the care provider) will be required to verify the child care expenses and that the expenses are not paid or reimbursed to the family from any source.



## **Pursuing an Eligible Activity**

The HRA 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.

### HRA Policy

#### *Information to be Gathered*

The HRA 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 HRA will use documentation from a state or local agency that monitors work-related requirements (e.g., welfare or unemployment). In such cases the HRA 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 HRA any reports provided to the other agency.

In the event third-party verification is not available, the HRA will provide the family with a form on which the family member must record job search efforts. The HRA will review this information at each subsequent reexamination for which this deduction is claimed.

#### *Furthering Education*

The HRA 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 HRA 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.

### HRA Policy

The HRA will verify that the type of child care selected by the family is allowable, as described in Chapter 6 (6-II.F).

The HRA 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 HRA 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.

### HRA Policy

The actual costs the family incurs will be compared with the HRA's established standards of reasonableness for the type of care in the locality to ensure that the costs are reasonable.

If the family presents a justification for costs that exceed typical costs in the area, the HRA will request additional documentation, as required, to support a determination that the higher cost is appropriate.

<b>EXHIBIT 7-1: SUMMARY OF DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR NONCITIZENS [HCV GB, pp. 5-9 and 5-10]</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All</b> noncitizens claiming eligible status must sign a declaration of eligible immigrant status on a form acceptable to the HRA.</li> <li>• Except for persons 62 or older, all noncitizens must sign a verification consent form</li> <li>• Additional documents are required based upon the person's status.</li> </ul>	
<b>Elderly Noncitizens</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	
<b>All other Noncitizens</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noncitizens that claim eligible immigration status also must present the applicable USCIS document. Acceptable USCIS documents are listed below.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form I-551 Alien Registration Receipt Card (for permanent resident aliens)</li> <li>• Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record annotated with one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Admitted as a Refugee Pursuant to Section 207”</li> <li>• “Section 208” or “Asylum”</li> <li>• “Section 243(h)” or “Deportation stayed by Attorney General”</li> <li>• “Paroled Pursuant to Section 221 (d)(5) of the USCIS”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record with no annotation accompanied by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A final court decision granting asylum (but only if no appeal is taken);</li> <li>• 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);</li> <li>• A court decision granting withholding of deportation; or</li> <li>• A letter from an asylum officer granting withholding or deportation (if application filed on or after 10/1/90).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form I-688 Temporary Resident Card annotated “Section 245A” or Section 210”.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form I-688B Employment Authorization Card annotated “Provision of Law 274a. 12(11)” or “Provision of Law 274a.12”.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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 <i>Federal Register</i></li> </ul>	



## Chapter 8

### HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS AND RENT REASONABLENESS DETERMINATIONS

[24 CFR 982 Subpart I and 24 CFR 982.507]

#### INTRODUCTION

HUD requires that all units occupied by families receiving Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) assistance meet HUD's Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and permits the HRA to establish additional requirements. The use of the term "HQS" in this plan refers to the combination of both HUD and HRA-established requirements.

All units must pass an HQS inspection prior to the approval of a lease and at least once every 24 months during the term of the contract, and at other times as needed, to determine that the unit meets HQS. HUD also requires HRAs to determine that rents for units under the program are reasonable when compared to comparable unassisted units in the market area.

This chapter explains HUD and HRA requirements related to housing quality and rent reasonableness as follows:

Part I. Physical Standards. This part discusses the physical standards required of units occupied by HCV-assisted families and identifies decisions about the acceptability of the unit that may be made by the family based upon the family's preference. It also identifies life-threatening conditions that must be addressed on an expedited basis.

Part II. The Inspection Process. This part describes the types of inspections the HRA will make and the steps that will be taken when units do not meet HQS.

Part III. Rent Reasonableness Determinations. This part discusses the policies the HRA will use to make rent reasonableness determinations.

Special HQS requirements for homeownership, manufactured homes, and other special housing types are discussed in Chapter 15 to the extent that they apply in this jurisdiction.



## **PART I: PHYSICAL STANDARDS**

### **8-I.A. GENERAL HUD REQUIREMENTS**

#### **HUD Performance and Acceptability Standards**

HUD's performance and acceptability standards for HCV-assisted housing are provided in 24 CFR 982.401. These standards cover the following areas:

- Sanitary facilities
- Food preparation and refuse disposal
- Space and Security
- Thermal Environment
- Illumination and electricity
- Structure and materials
- Interior Air Quality
- Water Supply
- Lead-based paint
- Access
- Site and neighborhood
- Sanitary condition
- Smoke Detectors

A summary of HUD performance criteria is provided in Exhibit 8-1. Additional guidance on these requirements is found in the following HUD resources:

- Housing Choice Voucher Guidebook, Chapter 10.
- HUD Housing Inspection Manual for Section 8 Housing
- HUD Inspection Form, form HUD-52580 (3/01) and Inspection Checklist, form HUD-52580-A (9/00)
- HUD Notice 2003-31, Accessibility Notice: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 and the Fair Housing Act of 1988.

#### **Tenant Preference Items**

HUD requires the HRA to enforce minimum HQS but also recognizes that certain judgments about the acceptability of the unit are left to the family. For example, the HRA must ensure that the unit contains the required sanitary facilities, but the family decides whether the cosmetic appearance of the facilities is acceptable. Exhibit 8-2 summarizes those items that are considered tenant preferences.

## **Modifications to Provide Accessibility**

Under the Fair Housing Act of 1988 an owner must not refuse the request of a family that contains a person with a disability to make necessary and reasonable modifications to the unit. Such modifications are at the family's expense. The owner may require restoration of the unit to its original condition if the modification would interfere with the owner or next occupant's full enjoyment of the premises. The owner may not increase a customarily required security deposit. However, the landlord may negotiate a restoration agreement that requires the family to restore the unit and, if necessary to ensure the likelihood of restoration, may require the tenant to pay a reasonable amount into an interest-bearing escrow account over a reasonable period of time. The interest in any such account accrues to the benefit of the tenant. The owner may also require reasonable assurances that the quality of the work will be acceptable and that any required building permits will be obtained. [24 CFR 100.203; Notice 2003-31].

Modifications to units to provide access for a person with a disability must meet all applicable HQS requirements and conform to the design, construction, or alteration of facilities contained in the UFAS and the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) [28 CFR 35.151(c) and Notice 2003-31] See Chapter 2 of this plan for additional information on reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities.

### HRA Policy

Any owner that intends to negotiate a restoration agreement or require an escrow account must submit the agreement(s) to the HRA for review.



## **8-I.B. ADDITIONAL LOCAL REQUIREMENTS**

The HRA may impose variations to the HQS as long as the additional criteria are not likely to adversely affect the health or safety of participant families or severely restrict housing choices for families. HUD approval is required for variations to the HQS. HUD approval is not required if the variations are clarifications of HUD's acceptability criteria or performance standards [24 CFR 982.401(a)(4)].

### **Thermal Environment [HCV GB p.10-7]**

The HRA must define a “healthy living environment” for the local climate. This may be done by establishing a temperature that the heating system must be capable of maintaining, that is appropriate for the local climate.

#### HRA Policy

The heating system must be capable of maintaining an interior temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit between October 15 and April 15.

## **Clarifications of HUD Requirements**

### **HRA Policy**

As permitted by HUD, the HRA has adopted the following specific requirements that elaborate on HUD standards.

#### ***Walls***

In areas where plaster or drywall is sagging, severely cracked, or otherwise damaged, it must be repaired or replaced.

#### ***Windows***

Window sashes must be in good condition, solid and intact, and properly fitted to the window frame. Damaged or deteriorated sashes must be replaced.

Windows must be weather-stripped as needed to ensure a weather-tight seal.

Window screens must be in good condition without holes. In each sleeping room there will be at least one exterior window that can be opened and that contains a screen.

#### ***Doors***

All exterior doors must be weather-tight to avoid any air or water infiltration, be lockable, have no holes, have all trim intact, and have a threshold.

All interior doors must have no holes through the entirety of the door and have all trim intact.

All doors and other means of egress shall remain operable as intended and not obstructed by locks, latches or any other obstruction that restricts egress per applicable code requirements.

#### ***Floors***

All floors must be structurally sound and free from tripping hazards.

All floors should have some type of base shoe, trim, or sealing for a "finished look." Vinyl base shoe is permitted.

#### ***Sinks***

During the initial inspection, if the tenant has not moved in, a missing drain stop will be listed as a deficiency and will require repair. If the tenant is residing in the unit at the time of Initial Inspection or at Annual Inspection it will be the tenant's preference whether or not they prefer any missing drain stops be replaced.

#### ***Toilets***

All worn or cracked toilet seats and tank lids must be replaced and toilet tank lid must fit properly. Faulty connections resulting in a leakage of water or gasses (i.e. toilet loose at base) must be repaired.

#### ***Structure and Materials***

Owners will be required to scrape peeling paint and repaint all surfaces cited for deteriorated paint with two coats of non-lead paint.

If all of the holes combined in one given room are larger than 8 ½ x 11 sheet of paper, it will be listed as a deficiency and will require repair.

### ***Electrical Requirements***

During the initial inspection, if the tenant has not moved in, a missing light globe will be listed as a deficiency and will require repair. If the tenant is residing in the unit at the time of Initial Inspection or at Annual Inspection it will be the tenant's preference whether or not they prefer any missing globes be replaced.

### ***Plumbing***

A ¾" overflow pipe must be present on the hot water heater safety valves and installed down to within 18" of the floor.

Water must not be running constantly (i.e. toilet or faucet).

### ***General***

If an appliance is in the dwelling unit, the appliance must be working as intended (i.e. ceiling fan, dishwasher).

The dwelling unit must comply with local code and ordinances and Minnesota State Statute.

### ***Security***

If window security bars or security screens are present on emergency exit windows, they must be equipped with a quick release system. The owner is responsible for ensuring that the family is instructed on the use of the quick release system.

### **8-I.C. LIFE-THREATENING CONDITIONS [24 CFR 982.404(a); FR Notice 1/18/17]**

HUD requires the HRA to define life-threatening conditions and to notify the owner or the family (whichever is responsible) of the corrections required. The responsible party must correct life-threatening conditions within 24 hours of HRA notification.

#### **HRA Policy**

The following are considered life-threatening conditions:

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 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Utilities not in service, including no running hot water

Conditions that present the imminent possibility of injury

Absence of a functioning toilet in the unit

Inoperable or missing smoke detectors

Missing or inoperable carbon monoxide detector within 10 feet of each room used for sleeping

If an owner fails to correct life-threatening conditions as required by the HRA, the HRA will enforce the HQS in accordance with HUD requirements. See 8-II-G.

If a family fails to correct a family-caused life-threatening condition as required by the HRA, the HRA will enforce the family obligations. See 8-II.H.

The owner will be required to repair an inoperable smoke detector or carbon monoxide detector.

## **8-I.D. OWNER AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES [24 CFR 982.404]**

### **Family Responsibilities**

The family is responsible for correcting the following HQS deficiencies:

- Tenant-paid utilities not in service
- Failure to provide or maintain appliances owned by the family
- Damage to the unit or premises caused by a household member or guest beyond normal wear and tear that results in a breach of the HQS. "Normal wear and tear" is defined as items which could not be charged against the tenant's security deposit under state law or court practice.

### **Owner Responsibilities**

The owner is responsible for all HQS violations not listed as a family responsibility above, even if the violation is caused by the family's living habits (e.g., vermin infestation). However, if the family's actions constitute a serious or repeated lease violation the owner may take legal action to evict the family.

### **8-I.E. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH ELEVATED BLOOD LEAD LEVEL [24 CFR 35.1225; FR Notice 1/13/17; Notice PIH 2017-13]**

If a HRA is notified by a public health department or other medical health care provider, or verifies information from a source other than a public health department or medical health care provider, that a child of less than six years of age, living in an HCV-assisted unit has been identified as having an elevated blood lead level, the HRA must complete an environmental investigation of the dwelling unit within 15 calendar days after being notified by a public health department or other medical health care provider. The environmental investigation must be completed in accordance with program requirements, and the result of the environmental investigation must be immediately provided to the owner of the dwelling unit. In cases where the public health department has already completed an evaluation of the unit, this information must be provided to the owner.

Within 30 days after receiving the environmental investigation report from the HRA, or the evaluation from the public health department, the owner is required to complete the reduction of identified lead-based paint hazards in accordance with the lead-based paint regulations [24 CFR 35.1325 and 35.1330; 40 CFR 745.227]. If the owner does not complete the “hazard reduction” as required, the dwelling unit is in violation of HQS and the HRA will take action in accordance with Section 8-II.G.

HRA reporting requirements, and data collection and record keeping responsibilities related to children with an elevated blood lead level are discussed in Chapter 16.

### **8-I.F. VIOLATION OF HQS SPACE STANDARDS [24 CFR 982.401, 24 CFR 982.403]**

A dwelling unit must:

- Provide adequate space and security for the family
- Have at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two persons

A unit that does not meet these HQS space standards is defined as *overcrowded*.

A living room may be used as sleeping (bedroom) space, but no more than two persons may occupy the space [HCV GB p. 10-6]. A bedroom or living/sleeping room must have at least:

- One window
- Two electrical outlets in proper operating condition (permanent overhead or wall-mounted light fixtures may count as one of the required electrical outlets)

If the HRA determines that a unit is overcrowded because of an increase in family size or a change in family composition, the HRA must issue the family a new voucher, and the family and HRA must try to find an acceptable unit as soon as possible. If an acceptable unit is available for rental by the family, the HRA must terminate the HAP contract in accordance with its terms.



## **PART II: THE INSPECTION PROCESS**

### **8-II.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR 982.405]**

#### **Types of Inspections**

The HRA conducts the following types of inspections as needed. Each type of inspection is discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

- *Initial Inspections.* The HRA conducts initial inspections in response to a request from the family to approve a unit for participation in the HCV program.
- *Annual/Biennial Inspections.* HUD requires the HRA to inspect each unit under lease at least annually or biennially, depending on HRA policy, to confirm that the unit still meets HQS. The inspection may be conducted in conjunction with the family's annual reexamination but also may be conducted separately.
- *Special Inspections.* A special inspection may be requested by the owner, the family, or a third party as a result of problems identified with a unit between annual inspections.
- *Quality Control Inspections.* HUD requires that a sample of units be inspected by a supervisor or other qualified individual to evaluate the work of the inspector(s) and to ensure that inspections are performed in compliance with the HQS.

#### **Inspection of HRA-Owned Units [24 CFR 982.352(b)]**

The HRA must obtain the services of an independent entity to perform all HQS inspections in cases where an HCV family is receiving assistance in an HRA-owned unit. An HRA-owned unit is defined as a unit that is owned by the HRA that administers the assistance under the consolidated ACC (including a unit owned by an entity substantially controlled by the HRA). The independent agency must communicate the results of each inspection to the family and the HRA. The independent agency must be approved by HUD and may be the unit of general local government for the HRA jurisdiction (unless the HRA is itself the unit of general local government or an agency of such government).

## **Inspection Costs [Notice PIH 2016-05]**

The HRA may not charge the family for unit inspections or reinspections [24 CFR 982.405(e)]. In the case of inspections of HRA-owned units, the HRA may compensate the independent agency from ongoing administrative fee for inspections performed. The HRA and the independent agency may not charge the family any fee or charge for the inspection [24 CFR.982.352(b)].

The HRA may not charge the owner for the inspection of the unit prior to the initial term of the lease or for a first inspection during assisted occupancy of the unit. However, the HRA may charge a reasonable fee to owners for reinspections in two situations: when the owner notifies the HRA that a repair has been made but the deficiency has not been corrected, and when the time for repairs has elapsed and the deficiency has not been corrected. Fees may not be imposed for tenant-caused damages, for cases in which the inspector could not gain access to the unit, or for new deficiencies discovered during a reinspection.

The owner may not pass the cost of a reinspection fee to the family. Reinspection fees must be added to the HRA's administrative fee reserves and may only be used for activities related to the provision of tenant-based assistance.

### HRA Policy

The HRA will not charge a fee for failed reinspections.

## **Remote Video Inspections (RVIs) [Notice PIH 2020-31]**

As an alternative to some or all on-site inspections, the HRA may, but is not required to, perform HQS inspections from a remote location using video streaming technology and a proxy at the inspection site. Since there may be some circumstances in which the application of technology provides insufficient information or evidence to allow the HRA to make appropriate determinations about whether a condition violates HQS, Notice PIH 2020-31 requires that if a HRA chooses to implement RVIs, the HRA should have policies and procedures in place to address such limitations.

### HRA Policy

The HRA will not conduct any HQS inspection using RVI.

## **Notice and Scheduling**

The family must allow the HRA to inspect the unit at reasonable times with reasonable notice [24 CFR 982.551(d)].

### HRA Policy

Both the family and the owner will be given reasonable notice of all inspections. Except in the case of a life-threatening emergency, reasonable notice is considered to be not less than 48 hours. Generally, inspections will be conducted on business days only and during business hours. In the case of a life-threatening emergency, the HRA will give as much notice as possible, given the nature of the emergency.

## **Owner and Family Inspection Attendance**

HUD permits the HRA to set policy regarding family and owner presence at the time of inspection [HCV GB p. 10-27].

### HRA Policy

When a family occupies the unit at the time of inspection an authorized adult must be present for the inspection. The presence of the owner or the owner's representative is encouraged but is not required.

At initial inspection of a vacant unit, the HRA will inspect the unit in the presence of the owner or owner's representative. At the owner's request the HRA will inspect a vacant dwelling unit without the owner or owner's representative present if access is provided (i.e. lockbox). The presence of a family representative is permitted but is not required.

## **8-II.B. INITIAL HQS INSPECTION [24 CFR 982.401(a)]**

### **Initial Inspections [FR Notice 1/18/17]**

The HRA may, but is not required to, approve assisted tenancy and start HAP if the unit fails HQS inspection, but only if the deficiencies identified are non-life-threatening. Further, the HRA may, but is not required to, authorize occupancy if a unit passed an alternative inspection in the last 24 months.

### HRA Policy

The unit must pass the HQS inspection on or before the effective date of the HAP contract. The HRA will not grant weather deferments.

The HRA will not rely on alternative inspections and will conduct an HQS inspection for each unit prior to executing a HAP contract with the owner.

### **Timing of Initial Inspections**

HUD requires HRAs with fewer than 1,250 budgeted units to complete the initial inspection, determine whether the unit satisfies HQS, and notify the owner and the family of the determination within 15 days of submission of the Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA). For HRAs with 1,250 or more budgeted units, to the extent practicable such inspection and determination must be completed within 15 days. The 15-day period is suspended for any period during which the unit is not available for inspection [982.305(b)(2)].

### HRA Policy

The HRA will complete the initial inspection, determine whether the unit satisfies HQS, and notify the owner and the family of the determination within 15 days of submission of the Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA).

## **Inspection Results and Reinspections**

### HRA Policy

If any HQS violations are identified, the owner will be notified of the deficiencies and be given a time frame to correct them. If requested by the owner, the time frame for correcting the deficiencies may be extended by the HRA for good cause. The HRA will reinspect the unit within five business days of the date the owner notifies the HRA that the required corrections have been made unless the HRA cannot gain access to the unit or other scheduling arrangements are made that do not affect tenancy.

Owner and Tenant Certification of Repair Completion forms will not be offered for Initial Inspections with noted deficiencies.

If the time period for correcting the deficiencies (or any HRA-approved extension) has elapsed, or the unit fails HQS at the time of the reinspection, the HRA will notify the owner and the family that the unit has been rejected and that the family must search for another unit. The HRA may agree to conduct a second reinspection, for good cause, at the request of the family and owner.

Following a failed reinspection, the family may submit a new Request for Tenancy Approval for the same unit after the owner has made repairs, if they are unable to locate another suitable unit.

## **Utilities**

Generally, at initial lease-up the owner is responsible for demonstrating that all utilities are in working order including those utilities that the family will be responsible for paying.

### HRA Policy

If utility service is not available for testing at the time of the initial inspection, the HRA will allow the utilities to be placed in service after the unit has met all other HQS requirements. The HRA will reinspect the unit to confirm that utilities are operational before the HAP contract is executed by the HRA.

## **Appliances [Form HUD-52580]**

### HRA Policy

If the family is responsible for supplying the stove and/or refrigerator, the HRA will allow the stove and refrigerator to be placed in the unit after the unit has met all other HQS requirements. The required appliances must be in place before the HAP contract is executed by the HRA. The HRA will execute the HAP contract based upon a certification from the family that the appliances have been installed and are working. A confirmatory inspection will be scheduled within 30 days of HAP contract approval.

**8-II.C. ANNUAL/BIENNIAL HQS INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.405 and 982.406;  
Notice PIH 2016-05]**

HRA Policy

Each unit under HAP contract must be inspected annually within 12 months of the last full HQS inspection.

The HRA will not rely on alternative inspection standards.

**Scheduling the Inspection**

HRA Policy

If an adult cannot be present on the scheduled date, the family should request that the HRA reschedule the inspection. The HRA and family will agree on a new inspection date that generally should take place within five business days of the originally scheduled date. The HRA may schedule an inspection more than five business days after the original date for good cause.

If the family misses the first scheduled appointment without requesting a new inspection date, the HRA will automatically schedule a second inspection. If the family misses two scheduled inspections without HRA approval, the HRA will consider the family to have violated its obligation to make the unit available for inspection. This may result in termination of the family's assistance in accordance with Chapter 12.

**8-II.D. SPECIAL INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.405(g)]**

If a participant or government official reports a life-threatening condition which the owner would be required to repair within 24 hours, the HRA must inspect the unit within 24 hours of notification. If the reported condition is not life-threatening, the HRA must inspect the unit within 15 days of notification.

HRA Policy

During a special inspection, the HRA generally will inspect only those deficiencies that were reported. However, the inspector will record any additional HQS deficiencies that are observed and will require the responsible party to make the necessary repairs.

If the annual/biennial inspection has been scheduled or is due within 90 days of the date the special inspection is scheduled the HRA may elect to conduct a full annual/biennial inspection.

## **8-II.E. QUALITY CONTROL INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.405(b); 24 CFR 985.3(e); HCV GB, p. 10-32]**

HUD requires an HRA supervisor or other qualified person to conduct quality control inspections of a sample of units to ensure that each inspector is conducting accurate and complete inspections and that there is consistency in the application of the HQS.

The unit sample must include only units that have been inspected within the preceding three months. The selected sample should be drawn to represent a cross section of neighborhoods and the work of a cross section of inspectors.

## **8-II.F. INSPECTION RESULTS AND REINSPECTIONS FOR UNITS UNDER HAP CONTRACT**

### **Notification of Corrective Actions**

The owner and the family will be notified in writing of the results of all inspections. When an inspection identifies HQS failures, the HRA will determine (1) whether or not the failure is a life-threatening condition and (2) whether the family or owner is responsible.

#### HRA Policy

When life-threatening conditions are identified, the HRA will immediately notify both parties by telephone or email. The corrective actions must be taken within 24 hours of the HRA's notice.

When failures that are not life-threatening are identified, the HRA will send the owner and the family a written notification of the inspection results within five business days of the inspection. The written notice will specify the time frame within which the failure must be corrected. Generally, not more than 30 days will be allowed for the correction.

The notice of inspection results will inform the owner that if life-threatening conditions are not corrected within 24 hours, and non-life-threatening conditions are not corrected within the specified time frame (or any HRA-approved extension), the owner's HAP will be abated in accordance with HRA policy (see 8-II.G.).

Likewise, in the case of family caused deficiencies, the notice will inform the family that if corrections are not made within the specified time frame (or any HRA-approved extension, if applicable) the family's assistance will be terminated in accordance with HRA policy (see Chapter 12).

## **Extensions**

For conditions that are life-threatening, the HRA cannot grant an extension to the 24-hour corrective action period. For conditions that are not life-threatening, the HRA may grant an exception to the required time frames for correcting the violation, if the HRA determines that an extension is appropriate [24 CFR 982.404].

### HRA Policy

Extensions will be granted in cases where the HRA has determined that the owner has made a good faith effort to correct the deficiencies and is unable to for reasons beyond the owner's control. Reasons may include, but are not limited to:

A repair cannot be completed because required parts or services are not available.

A repair cannot be completed because of weather conditions.

A reasonable accommodation is needed because the family includes a person with disabilities.

The length of the extension will be determined on a case by case basis, but will not exceed 60 days, except in the case of delays caused by weather conditions. In the case of weather conditions, extensions may be continued until the weather has improved sufficiently to make repairs possible. The necessary repairs must be made within 15 calendar days, once the weather conditions have subsided.

## **Reinspections**

### HRA Policy

The HRA will conduct a reinspection immediately following the end of the corrective period, or any HRA approved extension. The family and owner will be given reasonable notice of the reinspection appointment.

The HRA may offer the option a written Owner and Tenant Certification of Repair Completion form instead of completing a physical reinspection. This will not be an option if:

There are more than five deficiencies

There are life-threatening deficiencies

There are deficiencies the tenant would have difficulty identifying (i.e. negative slope on furnace venting)

The dwelling unit is owned by the HRA

The family or owner have a history of providing inaccurate information on previous Certification of Repair Completion Forms.

If the deficiencies have not been corrected by the time of the reinspection, the HRA will send a notice of abatement to the owner, or in the case of family caused violations, a notice of termination to the family, in accordance with HRA policies. If the HRA is unable to gain entry to the unit in order to conduct the scheduled reinspection, the HRA will consider the family to have violated its obligation to make the unit available for

inspection. This may result in termination of the family's assistance in accordance with Chapter 12.



## **8-II.G. ENFORCING OWNER COMPLIANCE**

If the owner fails to maintain the dwelling unit in accordance with HQS, the HRA must take prompt and vigorous action to enforce the owner obligations.

### **HAP Abatement**

If an owner fails to correct HQS deficiencies by the time specified by the HRA, HUD requires the HRA to abate housing assistance payments no later than the first of the month following the specified correction period (including any approved extension) [24 CFR 985.3(f)]. No retroactive payments will be made to the owner for the period of time the rent was abated. Owner rents are not abated as a result of HQS failures that are the family's responsibility.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will make all HAP abatements effective the first of the month following the expiration of the HRA specified correction period (including any extension).

The HRA will inspect abated units within five business days of the owner's notification that the work has been completed. Payment will resume effective on the day the unit passes inspection.

During any abatement period the family continues to be responsible for its share of the rent. The owner must not seek payment from the family for abated amounts and may not use the abatement as cause for eviction.

### **HAP Contract Termination**

The HRA must decide how long any abatement period will continue before the HAP contract will be terminated. The HRA should not terminate the contract until the family finds another unit, provided the family does so in a reasonable time [HCV GB p. 10-29] and must give the owner reasonable notice of the termination. The HRA will issue a voucher to permit the family to move to another unit as described in Chapter 10.

#### HRA Policy

The maximum length of time that HAP may be abated is 90 days. However, if the owner completes corrections and notifies the HRA before the termination date of the HAP contract, the HRA may rescind the termination notice if (1) the family still resides in the unit and wishes to remain in the unit and (2) the unit passes inspection.

Reasonable notice of HAP contract termination by the HRA is 30 days.

## **8-II.H. ENFORCING FAMILY COMPLIANCE WITH HQS [24 CFR 982.404(b)]**

Families are responsible for correcting any HQS violations listed in paragraph 8.I.D. If the family fails to correct a violation within the period allowed by the HRA (and any extensions), the HRA will terminate the family's assistance, according to the policies described in Chapter 12.

If the owner carries out a repair for which the family is responsible under the lease, the owner may bill the family for the cost of the repair.

## **PART III: RENT REASONABLENESS [24 CFR 982.507]**

### **8-III.A. OVERVIEW**

Except in the case of certain LIHTC- and HOME-assisted units, no HAP contract can be approved until the HRA has determined that the rent for the unit is reasonable. The purpose of the rent reasonableness test is to ensure that a fair rent is paid for each unit rented under the HCV program.

HUD regulations define a reasonable rent as one that does not exceed the rent charged for comparable, unassisted units in the same market area. HUD also requires that owners not charge more for assisted units than for comparable units on the premises. This part explains the method used to determine whether a unit's rent is reasonable.

#### **HRA-Owned Units [24 CFR 982.352(b)]**

In cases where an HCV family is receiving assistance in an HRA-owned unit, the HRA must obtain the services of an independent entity to determine rent reasonableness in accordance with program requirements, and to assist the family in negotiating the contract rent when the family requests assistance. An HRA-owned unit is defined as a unit that is owned by the HRA that administers the assistance under the consolidated ACC (including a unit owned by an entity substantially controlled by the HRA). The independent agency must communicate the results of the rent reasonableness determination to the family and the HRA. The independent agency must be approved by HUD, and may be the unit of general local government for the HRA jurisdiction (unless the HRA is itself the unit of general local government or an agency of such government).

## **8-III.B. WHEN RENT REASONABLENESS DETERMINATIONS ARE REQUIRED**

### **Owner-Initiated Rent Determinations**

The HRA must make a rent reasonableness determination at initial occupancy and whenever the owner requests a rent adjustment.

The owner and family first negotiate the rent for a unit. The HRA (or independent agency in the case of HRA-owned units) will assist the family with the negotiations upon request. At initial occupancy the HRA must determine whether the proposed rent is reasonable before a HAP Contract is signed. The owner must not change the rent during the initial lease term. Subsequent requests for rent adjustments must be consistent with the lease between the owner and the family. Rent increases will not be approved unless any failed items identified by the most recent HQS inspection have been corrected.

#### HRA Policy

After the initial occupancy period, the owner may request a rent adjustment in accordance with the owner's lease. For rent increase requests after initial lease-up, the HRA may request owners to provide information about the rents charged for other units on the premises, if the premises include more than 4 units. In evaluating the proposed rents in comparison to other units on the premises the HRA will consider unit size and length of tenancy in the other units.

The HRA will determine whether the requested increase is reasonable within 10 business days of receiving the request from the owner. The owner will be notified of the determination in writing.

All rents adjustments will be effective the first of the month following 60 days after the HRA's receipt of the owner's request or on the date specified by the owner, whichever is later.

### **HRA and HUD-Initiated Rent Reasonableness Determinations**

HUD requires the HRA to make a determination of rent reasonableness (even if the owner has not requested a change) if there is a 10 percent decrease in the fair market rent that goes into effect at least 60 days before the contract anniversary date. HUD also may direct the HRA to make a determination at any other time. The HRA may decide that a new determination of rent reasonableness is needed at any time.

#### HRA Policy

In addition to the instances described above, the HRA will make a determination of rent reasonableness at any time after the initial occupancy period if: (1) the HRA determines that the initial rent reasonableness determination was in error or (2) the HRA determines that the information provided by the owner about the unit or other units on the same premises was incorrect.

## **LIHTC and HOME-Assisted Units [24 CFR 982.507(c)]**

For units receiving low-income housing tax credits (LIHTCs) or units assisted under HUD's HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program, a rent comparison with unassisted units is not required if the voucher rent does not exceed the rent for other LIHTC- or HOME-assisted units in the project that are not occupied by families with tenant-based assistance.

For LIHTCs, if the rent requested by the owner does exceed the LIHTC rents for non-voucher families, the HRA must perform a rent comparability study in accordance with program regulations. In such cases, the rent shall not exceed the lesser of: (1) the reasonable rent as determined from the rent comparability study; or (2) the payment standard established by the HRA for the unit size involved.

### **8-III.C. HOW COMPARABILITY IS ESTABLISHED**

#### **Factors to Consider**

HUD requires HRAs to take into consideration the factors listed below when determining rent comparability. The HRA may use these factors to make upward or downward adjustments to the rents of comparison units when the units are not identical to the HCV-assisted unit.

- Location and age
- Unit size including the number of rooms and square footage of rooms
- The type of unit including construction type (e.g., single family, duplex, garden, low-rise, high-rise)
- The quality of the units including the quality of the original construction, maintenance and improvements made
- Amenities, services, and utilities included in the rent

#### **Units that Must Not Be Used as Comparables**

Comparable units must represent unrestricted market rents. Therefore, units that receive some form of federal, state, or local assistance that imposes rent restrictions cannot be considered comparable units. These include units assisted by HUD through any of the following programs: Section 8 project-based assistance, Section 236 and Section 221(d)(3) Below Market Interest Rate (BMIR) projects, HOME or Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program-assisted units in which the rents are subsidized; units subsidized through federal, state, or local tax credits; units subsidized by the Department of Agriculture rural housing programs, and units that are rent-controlled by local ordinance [Notice PIH 2002-22, Notice PIH 2005-20, and Notice PIH 2020-19].

**Note:** Notice PIH 2020-19, issued August 21, 2020, provides further guidance on the issue of what constitutes an assisted unit.

**Rents Charged for Other Units on the Premises**

The Request for Tenancy Approval (HUD-52517) requires owners to provide information, on the form itself, about the rent charged for other unassisted comparable units on the premises if the premises include more than 4 units.

By accepting the HRA payment each month the owner certifies that the rent is not more than the rent charged for comparable unassisted units on the premises. If asked to do so, the owner must give the HRA information regarding rents charged for other units on the premises.

## **8-III.D. HRA RENT REASONABLENESS METHODOLOGY**

### **How Market Data Is Collected**

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will collect and maintain data on market rents in the HRA's jurisdiction. Information sources include newspapers, realtors, market surveys, inquiries of owners and other available sources. The data will be maintained by bedroom size and market areas. Market areas may be defined by zip codes, census tract, neighborhood, and identifiable natural or man-made boundaries. The data will be updated on an ongoing basis.

### **How Rents Are Determined**

#### HRA Policy

The rent for a unit proposed for HCV assistance will be compared to the rent charged for comparable units in the same market area. The HRA will develop a range of prices for comparable units by bedroom size within defined market areas. Units proposed for HCV assistance will be compared to the units within this rent range. Because units may be similar, but not exactly like the unit proposed for HCV assistance, the HRA may make adjustments to the range of prices to account for these differences.

The adjustment must reflect the local market. Not all differences in units require adjustments (e.g., the presence or absence of a garbage disposal may not affect the rent in some market areas).

Adjustments may vary by unit type (e.g., a second bathroom may be more valuable in a three-bedroom unit than in a two-bedroom).

The adjustment must reflect the rental value of the difference—not its construction costs (e.g., it might cost \$20,000 to put on a new roof, but the new roof might not make any difference in what a tenant would be willing to pay because rental units are presumed to have functioning roofs).

When a comparable project offers rent concessions (e.g., first month rent-free, or reduced rent) reported monthly rents will be adjusted accordingly. For example, if a comparable project reports rents of \$500/month but new tenants receive the first month's rent free, the actual rent for the unit would be calculated as follows:  $\$500 \times 11 \text{ months} = 5500/12 \text{ months} = \text{actual monthly rent of } \$488$ .

The HRA will notify the owner of the rent the HRA can approve based upon its analysis of rents for comparable units. The owner may submit information about other comparable units in the market area. The HRA will confirm the accuracy of the information provided and consider this additional information when making rent determinations. The owner must submit any additional information within five business days of the HRA's request for information or the owner's request to submit information.



## **EXHIBIT 8-1: OVERVIEW OF HUD HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS**

Note: This document provides an overview of HQS. For more detailed information see the following documents:

- 24 CFR 982.401, Housing Quality Standards (HQS)
- Housing Choice Voucher Guidebook, Chapter 10.
- HUD Housing Inspection Manual for Section 8 Housing
- HUD Inspection Form, form HUD-52580 (3/01) and Inspection Checklist, form HUD-52580-A (9/00)

### **Sanitary Facilities**

The dwelling unit must include sanitary facilities within the unit. The sanitary facilities must be usable in privacy and must be in proper operating condition and adequate for personal cleanliness and disposal of human waste.

### **Food Preparation and Refuse Disposal**

The dwelling unit must have space and equipment suitable for the family to store, prepare, and serve food in a sanitary manner.

### **Space and Security**

The dwelling unit must provide adequate space and security for the family. This includes having at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two persons.

### **Thermal Environment**

The unit must have a safe system for heating the dwelling unit. Air conditioning is not required but if provided must be in proper operating condition. The dwelling unit must not contain unvented room heaters that burn gas, oil, or kerosene. Portable electric room heaters or kitchen stoves with built-in heating units are not acceptable as a primary source of heat for units located in climatic areas where permanent heat systems are required.

### **Illumination and Electricity**

Each room must have adequate natural or artificial illumination to permit normal indoor activities and to support the health and safety of occupants. The dwelling unit must have sufficient electrical sources so occupants can use essential electrical appliances. Minimum standards are set for different types of rooms. Once the minimum standards are met, the number, type and location of electrical sources are a matter of tenant preference.

### **Structure and Materials**

The dwelling unit must be structurally sound. Handrails are required when four or more steps are present, and protective railings are required when porches, balconies, and stoops are thirty inches or more off the ground. The elevator servicing the unit must be working [if there is one]. Manufactured homes must have proper tie-down devices capable of surviving wind loads common to the area.



## **Interior Air Quality**

The dwelling unit must be free of air pollutant levels that threaten the occupants' health. There must be adequate air circulation in the dwelling unit. Bathroom areas must have one openable window or other adequate ventilation. Any sleeping room must have at least one window. If a window was designed to be opened, it must be in proper working order.

## **Water Supply**

The dwelling unit must be served by an approved public or private water supply that is sanitary and free from contamination. Plumbing fixtures and pipes must be free of leaks and threats to health and safety.

## **Lead-Based Paint**

Lead-based paint requirements apply to dwelling units built prior to 1978 that are occupied or can be occupied by families with children under six years of age, excluding zero-bedroom dwellings. Owners must:

- Disclose known lead-based paint hazards to prospective tenants before the lease is signed,
- provide all prospective families with "Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home",
- Stabilize deteriorated painted surfaces and conduct hazard reduction activities within 30 days when identified by the HRA
- Notify tenants each time such an activity is performed
- Conduct all work in accordance with HUD safe practices
- As part of ongoing maintenance ask each family to report deteriorated paint
- Maintain covered housing without deteriorated paint if there is child under six in the family

For units occupied by elevated blood lead level (lead poisoned) children under six years of age, an environmental investigation must be conducted (paid for by the HRA). If lead hazards are identified during the environmental investigation, the owner must complete hazard reduction activities within 30 days.

See HCV GB p. 10-15 for a detailed description of these requirements. For additional information on lead-based paint requirements see 24 CFR 35, Subparts A, B, M, and R.

## **Access**

Use and maintenance of the unit must be possible without unauthorized use of other private properties. The building must provide an alternate means of exit in case of fire.

## **Site and Neighborhood**

The site and neighborhood must be reasonably free from disturbing noises and reverberations, excessive trash or vermin, or other dangers to the health, safety, and general welfare of the occupants.

**Sanitary Condition**

The dwelling unit and its equipment must be in sanitary condition and free of vermin and rodent infestation. The unit must have adequate barriers to prevent infestation.

**Smoke Detectors**

Smoke detectors must be installed in accordance with and meet the requirements of the National Fire Protection Association Standard (NFPA) 74 (or its successor standards). If the dwelling unit is occupied by any person with a hearing impairment, smoke detectors must have an appropriate alarm system as specified in NFPA 74 (or successor standards).

**Hazards and Heath/Safety**

The unit, interior and exterior common areas accessible to the family, the site, and the surrounding neighborhood must be free of hazards to the family's health and safety.



<b>EXHIBIT 8-2: SUMMARY OF TENANT PREFERENCE AREAS RELATED TO HOUSING QUALITY</b>
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Note: This document provides an overview of unit and site characteristics and conditions for which the family determines acceptability. For more detailed information see the following documents:

- Housing Choice Voucher Guidebook, Chapter 10.
- HUD Housing Inspection Manual for Section 8 Housing
- HUD Inspection Form, form HUD-52580 (3/01) and Inspection Checklist, form HUD-52580-A (9/00)

Provided the minimum housing quality standards have been met, HUD permits the family to determine whether the unit is acceptable with regard to the following characteristics.

- *Sanitary Facilities.* The family may determine the adequacy of the cosmetic condition and quality of the sanitary facilities, including the size of the lavatory, tub, or shower; the location of the sanitary facilities within the unit; and the adequacy of the water heater.
- *Food Preparation and Refuse Disposal.* The family selects size and type of equipment it finds acceptable. When the family is responsible for supplying cooking appliances, the family may choose to use a microwave oven in place of a conventional oven, stove, or range. When the owner is responsible for providing cooking appliances, the owner may offer a microwave oven in place of an oven, stove, or range only if other subsidized and unsubsidized units on the premises are furnished with microwave ovens only. The adequacy of the amount and type of storage space, the cosmetic conditions of all equipment, and the size and location of the kitchen are all determined by the family.
- *Space and Security.* The family may determine the adequacy of room sizes and room locations. The family is also responsible for deciding the acceptability of the type of door and window locks.
- *Energy conservation items.* The family may determine whether the amount of insulation, presence of absence of storm doors and windows and other energy conservation items are acceptable.
- *Illumination and Electricity.* The family may determine whether the location and the number of outlets and fixtures (over and above those required to meet HQS standards) are acceptable or if the amount of electrical service is adequate for the use of appliances, computers, or stereo equipment.

- (6) *Structure and Materials*. Families may determine whether minor defects, such as lack of paint, or worn flooring or carpeting will affect the livability of the unit.
- (7) *Indoor Air*. Families may determine whether window and door screens, filters, fans, or other devices for proper ventilation are adequate to meet the family's needs. However, if screens are present they must be in good condition.
- (8) *Sanitary Conditions*. The family determines whether the sanitary conditions in the unit, including minor infestations, are acceptable.
- (9) *Neighborhood conditions*. Families may determine whether neighborhood conditions such as the presence of drug activity, commercial enterprises, and convenience to shopping will affect the livability of the unit.

Families have no discretion with respect to lead-based paint standards and smoke detectors.

## Chapter 9

### GENERAL LEASING POLICIES

#### INTRODUCTION

Chapter 9 covers the lease-up process from the family's submission of a Request for Tenancy Approval to execution of the HAP contract.

In order for the HRA to assist a family in a particular dwelling unit, or execute a Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract with the owner of a dwelling unit, the HRA must determine that all the following program requirements are met:

- The unit itself must qualify as an eligible unit [24 CFR 982.305(a)]
- The unit must be inspected by the HRA and meet the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) [24 CFR 982.305(a)]
- The lease offered by the owner must be approvable and must include the required Tenancy Addendum [24 CFR 982.305(a)]
- The rent to be charged by the owner for the unit must be reasonable [24 CFR 982.305(a)]
- The owner must be an eligible owner, approvable by the HRA, with no conflicts of interest [24 CFR 982.306]
- For families initially leasing a unit only: Where the gross rent of the unit exceeds the applicable payment standard for the family, the share of rent to be paid by the family cannot exceed 40 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income [24 CFR 982.305(a)]

## **9-I.A. TENANT SCREENING**

The HRA has no liability or responsibility to the owner or other persons for the family's behavior or suitability for tenancy [24 CFR 982.307(a)(1)].

The HRA may elect to screen applicants for family behavior or suitability for tenancy. See Chapter 3 for a discussion of the HRA's policies with regard to screening applicant families for program eligibility [24 CFR 982.307(a)(1)].

The owner is responsible for screening and selection of the family to occupy the owner's unit. At or before HRA approval of the tenancy, the HRA must inform the owner that screening and selection for tenancy is the responsibility of the owner [24 CFR 982.307(a)(2)]. The HRA must also inform the owner or manager of his/her rights and obligations under the Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) [24 CFR 5.2005(a)(2)].

The HRA must provide the owner with the family's current and prior address (as shown in the HRA records) and the name and address (if known to the HRA) of the landlord at the family's current and prior address [24 CFR 982.307(b)(1)].

The HRA is permitted, but not required, to offer the owner other information in the HRA's possession about the tenancy history or drug trafficking of family members [24 CFR 982.307(b)(2)].

The HRA's policy on providing information to the owner must be included in the family's briefing packet [24 CFR 982.307(b)(3)].

The HRA may not disclose to the owner any confidential information provided by the family in response to an HRA request for documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking except at the written request or with the written consent of the individual providing the documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(b)(4)].

### HRA Policy

The HRA will not screen applicants for family behavior or suitability for tenancy.

The HRA will not provide additional screening information to the owner.

### **9-I.B. REQUESTING TENANCY APPROVAL [Form HUD-52517]**

After the family is issued a voucher, the family must locate an eligible unit, with an owner or landlord willing to participate in the voucher program. Once a family finds a suitable unit and the owner is willing to lease the unit under the program, the owner and the family must request the HRA to approve the assisted tenancy in the selected unit.

The owner and the family must submit two documents to the HRA:

- Completed Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) – Form HUD-52517
- Copy of the proposed lease, including the HUD-prescribed Tenancy Addendum – Form HUD-52641-A

The RTA contains important information about the rental unit selected by the family, including the unit address, number of bedrooms, structure type, year constructed, utilities included in the rent, and the requested beginning date of the lease, necessary for the HRA to determine whether to approve the assisted tenancy in this unit.

Owners must certify to the most recent amount of rent charged for the unit and provide an explanation for any difference between the prior rent and the proposed rent.

Owners must certify that they are not the parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother of any member of the family, unless the HRA has granted a request for reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities who is a member of the tenant household.

For units constructed prior to 1978, owners must either 1) certify that the unit, common areas, and exterior have been found to be free of lead-based paint by a certified inspector; or 2) attach a lead-based paint disclosure statement.



Both the RTA and the proposed lease must be submitted no later than the expiration date stated on the voucher. [HCV GB p.8-15].

### HRA Policy

The RTA must be signed by both the family and the owner.

The owner may submit the RTA on behalf of the family.

Completed RTA (including the proposed dwelling lease) must be submitted as hard copies, in-person, by mail, by email, or by fax.

The family may not submit, and the HRA will not process, more than one (1) RTA at a time.

When the family submits the RTA the HRA will review the RTA for completeness.

If the RTA is incomplete (including lack of signature by family, owner, or both), or if the dwelling lease is not submitted with the RTA, the HRA will notify the family and the owner of the deficiencies.

Missing information and/or missing documents will only be accepted as hard copies, in-person, by mail, by email, or by fax. The HRA will not accept missing information over the phone.

When the family submits the RTA and proposed lease, the HRA will also review the terms of the RTA for consistency with the terms of the proposed lease.

If the terms of the RTA are not consistent with the terms of the proposed lease, the HRA will notify the family and the owner of the discrepancies.

Corrections to the terms of the RTA and/or the proposed lease will only be accepted as hard copies, in-person, by mail, by email, or by fax. The HRA will not accept corrections by phone.

Because of the time sensitive nature of the tenancy approval process, the HRA will attempt to communicate with the owner and family by phone, fax, or email. The HRA will use mail when the parties cannot be reached by phone, fax, or email.

## **9-I.C. OWNER PARTICIPATION**

The HRA does not formally approve an owner to participate in the HCV program. However, there are a number of criteria where the HRA may deny approval of an assisted tenancy based on past owner behavior, conflict of interest, or other owner-related issues. There are also criteria for which the HRA must disapprove an owner. No owner has a right to participate in the HCV program [24 CFR 982.306(e)]

See Chapter 13 for a full discussion of owner qualification to participate in the HCV program.

## **9-I.D. ELIGIBLE UNITS**

There are a number of criteria that a dwelling unit must meet in order to be eligible for assistance under the voucher program. Generally, a voucher-holder family may choose any available rental dwelling unit on the market in the HRA's jurisdiction. This includes the dwelling unit they are currently occupying.

### **Ineligible Units [24 CFR 982.352(a)]**

The HRA may not assist a unit under the voucher program if the unit is a public housing or Indian housing unit; a unit receiving project-based assistance under section 8 of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437f); nursing homes, board and care homes, or facilities providing continual psychiatric, medical, or nursing services; college or other school dormitories; units on the grounds of penal, reformatory, medical, mental, and similar public or private institutions; a unit occupied by its owner or by a person with any interest in the unit.

### **HRA-Owned Units [24 CFR 982.352(b)]**

Otherwise eligible units that are owned or substantially controlled by the HRA issuing the voucher may also be leased in the voucher program. In order for a HRA-owned unit to be leased under the voucher program, the unit must not be ineligible housing and the HRA must inform the family, both orally and in writing, that the family has the right to select any eligible unit available for lease and that the family is free to select a HRA-owned unit without any pressure or steering by the HRA.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA has eligible HRA-owned units available for leasing under the voucher program.

The HRA will inform the family of this housing at the time of the briefing. The HRA will also inform the family, both orally and in writing, that the family has the right to select any eligible unit available for lease and that the family is free to select a HRA-owned unit without any pressure or steering by the HRA.

### **Special Housing Types [24 CFR 982 Subpart M]**

HUD regulations permit, but do not generally require, the HRA to permit families to use voucher assistance in a number of special housing types in accordance with the specific requirements applicable to those programs. These special housing types include single room occupancy (SRO) housing, congregate housing, group home, shared housing, manufactured home space (where the family owns the manufactured home and leases only the space), cooperative housing and homeownership option. See Chapter 15 for specific information and policies on any of these housing types that the HRA has chosen to allow.

The regulations do require the HRA to permit use of any special housing type if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

**Duplicative Assistance [24 CFR 982.352(c)]**

A family may not receive the benefit of HCV tenant-based assistance while receiving the benefit of any of the following forms of other housing subsidy, for the same unit or for a different unit:

- Public or Indian housing assistance;
- Other Section 8 assistance (including other tenant-based assistance);
- Assistance under former Section 23 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (before amendment by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974);
- Section 101 rent supplements;
- Section 236 rental assistance payments;
- Tenant-based assistance under the HOME Program;
- Rental assistance payments under Section 521 of the Housing Act of 1949 (a program of the Rural Development Administration);
- Any local or State rent subsidy;
- Section 202 supportive housing for the elderly;
- Section 811 supportive housing for persons with disabilities; (11) Section 202 projects for non-elderly persons with disabilities (Section 162 assistance); or
- Any other duplicative federal, State, or local housing subsidy, as determined by HUD. For this purpose, 'housing subsidy' does not include the housing component of a welfare payment, a social security payment received by the family, or a rent reduction because of a tax credit.

**Housing Quality Standards (HQS) [24 CFR 982.305 and 24 CFR 982.401]**

In order to be eligible, the dwelling unit must be in decent, safe and sanitary condition. This determination is made using HUD's Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and/or equivalent state or local standards approved by HUD. See Chapter 8 for a full discussion of the HQS standards, as well as the process for HQS inspection at initial lease-up.

## **Unit Size**

In order to be eligible, the dwelling unit must be appropriate for the number of persons in the household. A family must be allowed to lease an otherwise acceptable dwelling unit with fewer bedrooms than the number of bedrooms stated on the voucher issued to the family, provided the unit meets the applicable HQS space requirements [24 CFR 982.402(d)]. The family must be allowed to lease an otherwise acceptable dwelling unit with more bedrooms than the number of bedrooms stated on the voucher issued to the family. See Chapter 5 for a full discussion of subsidy standards.

## **Rent Reasonableness [24 CFR 982.305 and 24 CFR 982.507]**

In order to be eligible, the dwelling unit must have a reasonable rent. The rent must be reasonable in relation to comparable unassisted units in the area and must not be in excess of rents charged by the owner for comparable, unassisted units on the premises. See Chapter 8 for a full discussion of rent reasonableness and the rent reasonableness determination process.

## **Rent Burden [24 CFR 982.508]**

Where a family is initially leasing a unit and the gross rent of the unit exceeds the applicable payment standard for the family, the family share cannot exceed 40 percent of the family's adjusted monthly income. The term "family share" refers to the amount the family pays toward rent and utilities. The gross rent for the unit minus the total housing assistance payment (HAP) for the unit equals the family share. See Chapter 6 for a discussion of calculation of gross rent, the use of payment standards, and calculation of family income, family share of rent and HAP.

## **9-I.E. LEASE AND TENANCY ADDENDUM**

The family and the owner must execute a written dwelling lease agreement for the assisted unit. This written lease is a contract between the tenant family and the owner; the HRA is not a party to this contract.

The tenant must have legal capacity to enter a lease under State and local law. 'Legal capacity' means that the tenant is bound by the terms of the lease and may enforce the terms of the lease against the owner [24 CFR 982.308(a)]

### **Lease Form and Tenancy Addendum [24 CFR 982.308]**

If the owner uses a standard lease form for rental to unassisted tenants in the locality or the premises, the lease must be in such standard form. If the owner does not use a standard lease form for rental to unassisted tenants, the owner may use another form of lease. The HAP contract prescribed by HUD contains the owner's certification that if the owner uses a standard lease form for rental to unassisted tenants, the lease for the assisted tenants is in such standard form.

All provisions in the HUD-required Tenancy Addendum must be added word-for-word to the owner's standard lease form. The Tenancy Addendum includes the HUD requirements for the tenancy. Because it is a part of the lease, the tenant shall have the right to enforce the Tenancy Addendum against the owner. If there is a conflict between the owner's lease and the Tenancy Addendum, the terms of the Tenancy Addendum shall prevail over any other provisions of the lease.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA does not provide a model or standard dwelling lease for owners to use in the HCV program.

### **Lease Information [24 CFR 982.308(d)]**

The assisted dwelling lease must contain all of the required information as listed below:

- The names of the owner and the tenant:
- The unit rented (address, apartment number, and any other information needed to identify the contract unit)
- The term of the lease (initial term and any provisions for renewal)
- The amount of the monthly rent to owner
- A specification of what utilities and appliances are to be supplied by the owner, and what utilities and appliances are to be supplied by the family

### **Term of Assisted Tenancy**

The initial term of the assisted dwelling lease must be for at least one year [24 CFR 982.309]. The initial lease term is also stated in the HAP contract.

The HUD program regulations permit the HRA to approve a shorter initial lease term if certain conditions are met.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will not approve an initial lease term of less than one (1) year.

During the initial term of the lease, the owner may not raise the rent to owner [24 CFR 982.309].

Any provisions for renewal of the dwelling lease will be stated in the dwelling lease [HCV Guidebook, pg. 8-22]. There are no HUD requirements regarding any renewal extension terms, except that they must be stated in the dwelling lease if they exist.

The HRA may execute the HAP contract even if there is less than one year remaining from the beginning of the initial lease term to the end of the last expiring funding increment under the consolidated ACC. [24 CFR 982.309(b)].

### **Security Deposit [24 CFR 982.313 (a) and (b)]**

The owner may collect a security deposit from the tenant. The HRA may prohibit security deposits in excess of private market practice, or in excess of amounts charged by the owner to unassisted tenants. However, if the HRA chooses to do so, language to this effect must be added to Part A of the HAP contract [Form HUD-52641].

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will allow the owner to collect any security deposit amount the owner determines is appropriate. Therefore, no modifications to the HAP contract will be necessary.

## **Separate Non-Lease Agreements between Owner and Tenant**

Owners may not demand or accept any rent payment from the family in excess of the rent to the owner as approved by the HRA minus the HRA's housing assistance payments to the owner [24 CFR 982.451(b)(4)].

The owner may not charge the tenant extra amounts for items customarily included in rent in the locality, or provided at no additional cost to unsubsidized tenants in the premises [24 CFR 982.510(c)].

### HRA Policy

The HRA permits owners and families to execute separate, non-lease agreements for services, appliances (other than range and refrigerator) and other items that are not included in the lease.

Any items, appliances, or other services that are customarily provided to unassisted families as part of the dwelling lease with those families, or are permanently installed in the dwelling unit must be included in the dwelling lease for the assisted family. These items, appliances or services cannot be placed under a separate non-lease agreement between the owner and family. Side payments for additional rent, or for items, appliances or services customarily provided to unassisted families as part of the dwelling lease for those families, are prohibited.

Any items, appliances, or other services that are not customarily provided to unassisted families as part of the dwelling lease with those families, are not permanently installed in the dwelling unit and where the family has the sole option of not utilizing the item, appliance or service, may be included in a separate non-lease agreement between the owner and the family.

The family is not liable and cannot be held responsible under the terms of the assisted dwelling lease for any charges pursuant to a separate non-lease agreement between the owner and the family. Non-payment of any charges pursuant to a separate non-lease agreement between the owner and the family cannot be a cause for eviction or termination of tenancy under the terms of the assisted dwelling lease.

Separate non-lease agreements that involve additional items, appliances or other services may be considered amenities offered by the owner and may be taken into consideration when determining the reasonableness of the rent for the property.

## **HRA Review of Lease**

The HRA will review the dwelling lease for compliance with all applicable requirements.

### HRA Policy

If the dwelling lease is incomplete or incorrect, the HRA will notify the family and the owner of the deficiencies. Missing and corrected lease information will only be accepted as hard copies, in-person, by mail, by email, or by fax. The HRA will not accept missing and corrected information over the phone.

Because the initial leasing process is time-sensitive, the HRA will attempt to communicate with the owner and family by phone, fax, or email. The HRA will use mail when the parties can't be reached by phone, fax, or email.

The HRA is permitted, but is not required, to review the lease to determine if the lease complies with State and local law and is permitted to decline to approve the tenancy if the HRA determines that the lease does not comply with State or local law [24 CFR 982.308(c)]

### HRA Policy

The HRA will not review the owner's lease for compliance with state/local law.



### **9-I.F. TENANCY APPROVAL [24 CFR 982.305]**

After receiving the family's Request for Tenancy Approval, with proposed dwelling lease, the HRA must promptly notify the family and owner whether the assisted tenancy is approved.

Prior to approving the assisted tenancy and execution of a HAP contract, the HRA must ensure that all required actions and determinations, discussed in Part I of this chapter have been completed.

These actions include ensuring that the unit is eligible; the unit has been inspected by the HRA and meets the Housing Quality Standards (HQS); the lease offered by the owner is approvable and includes the required Tenancy Addendum; the rent to be charged by the owner for the unit must be reasonable; where the family is initially leasing a unit and the gross rent of the unit exceeds the applicable payment standard for the family, the share of rent to be paid by the family does not exceed 40 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income [24 CFR 982.305(a)]; the owner is an eligible owner, not disapproved by the HRA, with no conflicts of interest [24 CFR 982.306]; the family and the owner have executed the lease, including the Tenancy Addendum, and the lead-based paint disclosure information [24 CFR 982.305(b)].

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will complete its determination within 10 business days of receiving all required information.

If the dwelling unit is located in a city that requires a rental license, the dwelling unit must be licensed as such.

The bedroom size of the dwelling unit will match the bedroom size listed on the rental license for the unit, if applicable.

If the dwelling unit is located in a city that does not require a rental license, bedroom size will be determined based on the following criteria for rooms designated as bedrooms:

- Must be a window present and the window must be openable if designed to be opened
- Must have two working outlets or one working outlet and one working permanently installed light fixture

If the terms of the RTA/proposed lease are changed for any reason, including but not limited to negotiation with the HRA, the HRA will obtain corrected copies of the RTA and proposed lease, signed by the family and the owner.

Corrections to the RTA/proposed lease will only be accepted as hard copies, in-person, by mail, by email, or by fax. The HRA will not accept corrections over the phone.

If the HRA determines that the tenancy cannot be approved for any reason, the owner and the family will be notified in writing and given the opportunity to address any reasons for disapproval. The HRA will instruct the owner and family of the steps that are necessary to obtain approval of the tenancy.

Where the tenancy is not approvable because the unit is not approvable, the family must continue to search for eligible housing within the timeframe of the issued voucher.

If the tenancy is not approvable due to rent affordability or rent reasonableness, the HRA will attempt to negotiate the rent with the owner. If a new, approvable rent is negotiated, the tenancy will be approved. If the owner is not willing to negotiate an approvable rent, the family must continue to search for eligible housing within the timeframe of the issued voucher.

## **9-I.G. HAP CONTRACT EXECUTION [24 CFR 982.305]**

The HAP contract is a written agreement between the HRA and the owner of the dwelling unit. Under the HAP contract, the HRA agrees to make housing assistance payments to the owner on behalf of the family, and the owner agrees to comply with all program requirements as stated in the HAP contract.

The HAP contract form is prescribed by HUD.

If the HRA has given approval for the family of the assisted tenancy, the owner and the HRA must execute the HAP contract.

The term of the HAP contract must be the same as the term of the lease [24 CFR 982.451(a)(2)].

The HRA is permitted to execute a HAP contract even if the funding currently available does not extend for the full term of the HAP contract.

The HRA must make a best effort to ensure that the HAP contract is executed before the beginning of the lease term. Regardless, the HAP contract must be executed no later than 60 calendar days from the beginning of the lease term.

The HRA may not pay any housing assistance payment to the owner until the HAP contract has been executed. If the HAP contract is executed during the period of 60 calendar days from the beginning of the lease term, the HRA will pay housing assistance payments after execution of the HAP contract (in accordance with the terms of the HAP contract), to cover the portion of the lease term before execution of the HAP contract (a maximum of 60 days).

Any HAP contract executed after the 60-day period is void, and the HRA may not pay any housing assistance payment to the owner.

### **HRA Policy**

The owner and the assisted family will execute the dwelling lease and the owner must provide a copy to the HRA. The HRA will ensure that both the owner and the assisted family receive copies of the dwelling lease.

The owner and the HRA will execute the HAP contract. The HRA will not execute the HAP contract until the owner has submitted IRS form W-9 and Authorization for Direct Deposit. The HRA will ensure that the owner receives a copy of the executed HAP contract.

As required under VAWA 2013, once the HAP contract and lease have been executed and the family has been admitted to the program, the HRA will notify families of their rights under VAWA by providing all families with a copy of the domestic violence certification form (HUD-5382) as well as the VAWA notice of occupancy rights (form HUD-5380).

See Chapter 13 for a discussion of the HAP contract and contract provisions.

### **9-I.H. CHANGES IN LEASE OR RENT [24 CFR 982.308]**

If the tenant and the owner agree to any changes in the lease, such changes must be in writing, and the owner must immediately give the HRA a copy of such changes. The lease, including any changes, must remain in accordance with the requirements of this chapter.

Generally, HRA approval of tenancy and execution of a new HAP contract are not required for changes in the lease. However, under certain circumstances, the execution of a new lease and HAP contract are required. These circumstances include:

- Changes in lease requirements governing tenant or owner responsibilities for utilities or appliances
- Changes in lease provisions governing the term of the lease
- The family moves to a new unit, even if the unit is in the same building or complex

In these cases, if the HCV assistance is to continue, the family must submit a new Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) along with a new dwelling lease containing the proposed changes. A new tenancy must then be approved in accordance with this chapter.

Where the owner is changing the amount of the rent to owner, the owner must notify the HRA at least 60 days before any such changes go into effect [24 CFR 982.308(g)(4)]. The HRA will agree to such an increase only if the amount of the rent to owner is considered reasonable according to the rent reasonableness standards discussed in Chapter 8. If the requested rent is not found to be reasonable, the owner must either reduce the requested rent increase, or terminate the tenancy in accordance with the terms of the lease.

No rent increase is permitted during the initial term of the lease [24 CFR 982.309(a)(3)].

#### **HRA Policy**

Where the owner is requesting a rent increase, the HRA will determine whether the requested increase is reasonable within 30 days of receiving the request from the owner. The owner will be notified of the determination in writing.

Rent increases will go into effect on the first of the month following the 60-day period after the owner notifies the HRA of the rent change or on the date specified by the owner, whichever is later.



## Chapter 10

### MOVING WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE AND PORTABILITY

#### INTRODUCTION

Freedom of housing choice is a hallmark of the housing choice voucher (HCV) program. In general, HUD regulations impose few restrictions on where families may live or move with HCV assistance. This chapter sets forth HUD regulations and HRA policies governing moves within or outside the HRA's jurisdiction in two parts:

Part I: Moving with Continued Assistance. This part covers the general rules that apply to all moves by a family assisted under the HRA's HCV program, whether the family moves to another unit within the HRA's jurisdiction or to a unit outside the HRA's jurisdiction under portability.

Part II: Portability. This part covers the special rules that apply to moves by a family under portability, whether the family moves out of or into the HRA's jurisdiction. This part also covers the special responsibilities that the HRA has under portability regulations and procedures.



## **PART I: MOVING WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE**

### **10-I.A. ALLOWABLE MOVES**

HUD lists six regulatory conditions under which an assisted family is allowed to move to a new unit with continued assistance. Permission to move is subject to the restrictions set forth in section 10-I.B.

- The family has a right to terminate the lease on notice to the owner (for the owner's breach or otherwise) and has given a notice of termination to the owner in accordance with the lease [24 CFR 982.354(b)(3)]. If the family terminates the lease on notice to the owner, the family must give the HRA a copy of the notice at the same time [24 CFR 982.354(d)(1)].
- The lease for the family's unit has been terminated by mutual agreement of the owner and the family [24 CFR 982.354(b)(1)(ii)].

#### HRA Policy

If the family and the owner mutually agree to terminate the lease for the family's unit, the family must give the HRA a copy of the termination agreement.



- The owner has given the family a notice to vacate, has commenced an action to evict the family, or has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the family [24 CFR 982.354(b)(2)]. The family must give the HRA a copy of any owner eviction notice [24 CFR 982.551(g)].
- The family or a member of the family is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and the move is needed to protect the health or safety of the family or family member [24 CFR 982.354(b)(4)]. This condition applies even when the family has moved out of its unit in violation of the lease, with or without prior notification to the HRA, if the family or family member who is the victim reasonably believed that he or she was imminently threatened by harm from further violence if he or she remained in the unit [24 CFR 982.354(b)(4), 24 CFR 982.353(b)]. The HRA must adopt an emergency transfer plan as required by regulations at 24 CFR 5.2007(e).

### HRA Policy

If a family requests permission to move with continued assistance or for an external transfer to another covered housing program operated by the HRA based on a claim that the move is necessary to protect the health or safety of a family member who is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the HRA will request that the resident request the emergency transfer using form HUD-5383, and the HRA will request documentation in accordance with section 16-IX.D of this plan.

The HRA reserves the right to waive the documentation requirement if it determines that a statement or other corroborating evidence from the family or family member will suffice. In such cases the HRA will document the waiver in the family's file.

The HRA may choose to provide a voucher to facilitate an emergency transfer of the victim without first terminating the assistance of the perpetrator.

Before granting an emergency transfer, the HRA will ensure the victim is eligible to receive continued assistance based on the citizenship or immigration status of the victim.

The HRA has adopted an emergency transfer plan, which is included as Exhibit 16-3 to this plan and discusses external transfers to other covered housing programs.

- The HRA has terminated the HAP contract for the family's unit for the owner's breach [24 CFR 982.354(b)(1)(i)].
- The HRA determines that the family's current unit does not meet the HQS space standards because of an increase in family size or a change in family composition. In such cases, the HRA must issue the family a new voucher, and the family and HRA must try to find an acceptable unit as soon as possible. If an acceptable unit is available for the family, the HRA must terminate the HAP contract for the family's old unit in accordance with the HAP contract terms and must notify both the family and the owner of the termination. The HAP contract terminates at the end of the calendar month that follows the calendar month in which the HRA gives notice to the owner. [24 CFR 982.403(a) and (c)]

## **10-I.B. RESTRICTIONS ON MOVES**

A family's right to move is generally contingent upon the family's compliance with program requirements [24 CFR 982.1(b)(2)]. HUD specifies two conditions under which a HRA may deny a family permission to move and two ways in which a HRA may restrict moves by a family.

### **Denial of Moves**

HUD regulations permit the HRA to deny a family permission to move under the following conditions:

#### ***Insufficient Funding***

The HRA may deny a family permission to move either within or outside the HRA's jurisdiction if the HRA does not have sufficient funding for continued assistance [24 CFR 982.354(e)(1)]. However, Notice PIH 2016-09 significantly restricts the ability of HRAs to deny permission to move due to insufficient funding and places further requirements on HRAs regarding moves denied due to lack of funding. The requirements found in this notice are mandatory.

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will deny a family permission to move on grounds that the HRA does not have sufficient funding for continued assistance if (a) the move is initiated by the family, not the owner or the HRA; (b) the HRA can demonstrate that the move will, in fact, result in higher subsidy costs (c) the HRA can demonstrate, in accordance with the policies in Part VIII of Chapter 16, that it does not have sufficient funding in its annual budget to accommodate the higher subsidy costs; and (d) for portability moves, the receiving HRA is not absorbing the voucher.

If the HRA does not have sufficient funding for continued assistance, but the family must move from their unit (e.g., the unit failed HQS), the family may move to a higher cost unit if the move is within the HRA's jurisdiction. The HRA, however, will not allow the family to move under portability in this situation if the family wishes to move to a higher cost area.

For both moves within the HRA's jurisdiction and outside under portability, the HRA will not deny a move due to insufficient funding if the HRA previously approved the move and subsequently experienced a funding shortfall if the family cannot remain in their current unit. The HRA will rescind the voucher in this situation if the family will be allowed to remain in their current unit.

The HRA will create a list of families whose moves have been denied due to insufficient funding. The HRA will keep the family's request open indefinitely, and when funds become available, the families on this list will take precedence over families on the waiting list. The HRA will use the same procedures for notifying families with open requests to move when funds become available as it uses for notifying families on the waiting list (see section 4-III.D).

The HRA will inform the family of its policy regarding moves denied due to insufficient funding in a letter to the family at the time the move is denied.

### ***Grounds for Denial or Termination of Assistance***

The HRA may deny a family permission to move if it has grounds for denying or terminating the family's assistance [24 CFR 982.354(e)(2)].

#### **HRA Policy**

If the HRA has grounds for denying or terminating a family's assistance, the HRA will act on those grounds in accordance with the regulations and policies set forth in Chapters 3 and 12, respectively. In general, it will not deny a family permission to move for this reason; however, it retains the discretion to do so under special circumstances.

### **Restrictions on Elective Moves [24 CFR 982.354(c)]**

HUD regulations permit the HRA to prohibit any elective move by a participant family during the family's initial lease term. They also permit the HRA to prohibit more than one elective move by a participant family during any 12-month period. However, such prohibitions, if adopted, do not apply when the family or a member of the family is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and the move is needed to protect the health or safety of the family or family member. (For the policy on documentation of abuse, see section 10-I.A.) In addition, the HRA may not establish a policy permitting moves only at reexamination [Notice PIH 2016-09].

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will deny a family permission to make an elective move during the family's initial lease term. This policy applies to moves within the HRA's jurisdiction or outside it under portability.

The HRA will also deny a family permission to make more than one elective move during any 12-month period. This policy applies to all assisted families residing in the HRA's jurisdiction.

The HRA will consider exceptions to these policies for the following reasons: to protect the health or safety of a family member (e.g., lead-based paint hazards, domestic violence, witness protection programs), to accommodate a change in family circumstances (e.g., new employment, school attendance in a distant area), or to address an emergency situation over which a family has no control.

In addition, the HRA will allow exceptions to these policies for purposes of reasonable accommodation of a family member who is a person with disabilities (see Chapter 2).

## **10-I.C. MOVING PROCESS**

### **Notification**

If a family wishes to move to a new unit, the family must notify the HRA and the owner before moving out of the old unit or terminating the lease on notice to the owner [24 CFR 982.354(d)(2)]. If the family wishes to move to a unit outside the HRA's jurisdiction under portability, the notice to the HRA must specify the area where the family wishes to move [24 CFR 982.354(d)(2)]. The notices must be in writing [24 CFR 982.5].

### **Approval**

#### HRA Policy

Upon receipt of a family's written notification that it wishes to move, the HRA will determine whether the move is approvable in accordance with the regulations and policies set forth in sections 10-I.A and 10-I.B. The HRA will notify the family in writing of its determination within 10 business days following receipt of the family's notification.

### **Reexamination of Family Income and Composition**

#### HRA Policy

For families approved to move to a new unit within the HRA's jurisdiction, the HRA will not perform a new annual reexamination.

For families moving into or families approved to move out of the HRA's jurisdiction under portability, the HRA will follow the policies set forth in Part II of this chapter.

### **Voucher Issuance and Briefing**

#### HRA Policy

For families approved to move to a new unit within the HRA's jurisdiction, the HRA will issue a new voucher within 10 business days of the HRA's written approval to move. No briefing is required for these families. The HRA will follow the policies set forth in Chapter 5 on voucher term, extension, and expiration. If a family does not locate a new unit within the term of the voucher and any extensions, the family may remain in its current unit with continued voucher assistance if the owner agrees and the HRA approves. Otherwise, the family will lose its assistance.

For families moving into or families approved to move out of the HRA's jurisdiction under portability, the HRA will follow the policies set forth in Part II of this chapter.

### **Housing Assistance Payments [24 CFR 982.311(d)]**

When a family moves out of an assisted unit, the HRA may not make any housing assistance payment to the owner for any month **after** the month the family moves out. The owner may keep the housing assistance payment for the month when the family moves out of the unit.

If a participant family moves from an assisted unit with continued tenant-based assistance, the term of the assisted lease for the new assisted unit may begin during the month the family moves out of the first assisted unit. Overlap of the last housing assistance payment (for the month when the family moves out of the old unit) and the first assistance payment for the new unit, is not considered to constitute a duplicative housing subsidy.

### **Zero HAP Families Who Wish to Move [24 CFR 982.455]**

A participant who is not receiving any subsidy, but whose HAP contract is still in force, may request a voucher to move to a different unit. The HRA must issue a voucher to move unless it has grounds to deny assistance under the program regulations. However, if the HRA determines no subsidy would be paid at the new unit, the HRA may refuse to enter into a HAP contract on behalf of the family.

#### HRA Policy

If a zero HAP family requests to move to a new unit, the family may request a voucher to move. If no subsidy will be paid at the unit to which the family requests to move, the HRA will enter into a HAP contract on behalf of the family for the new unit.

## PART II: PORTABILITY

### 10-II.A. OVERVIEW

Within the limitations of the regulations and this plan, a participant family or an applicant family that has been issued a voucher has the right to use tenant-based voucher assistance to lease a unit anywhere in the United States providing that the unit is located within the jurisdiction of a HRA administering a tenant-based voucher program [24 CFR 982.353(b)]. The process by which a family obtains a voucher from one HRA and uses it to lease a unit in the jurisdiction of another HRA is known as portability. The HRA that issues the voucher is called the **initial HRA**. The HRA that has jurisdiction in the area to which the family wants to move is called the **receiving HRA**.

The receiving HRA has the option of administering the family's voucher for the initial HRA or absorbing the family into its own program. Under the first option, the receiving HRA provides all housing services for the family and bills the initial HRA for the family's housing assistance payments and the fees for administering the family's voucher. Under the second option, the receiving HRA pays for the family's assistance with its own program funds, and the initial HRA has no further relationship with the family. The initial HRA must contact the receiving HRA via email or other confirmed delivery method to determine whether the receiving HRA will administer or absorb the initial HRA's voucher. Based on the receiving HRA's response, the initial HRA must determine whether they will approve or deny the portability request [Notice PIH 2016-09].

HRAs commonly act as both the initial and receiving HRA because families may move into or out of their jurisdiction under portability. Each role involves different responsibilities. The HRA will follow the rules and policies in section 10-II.B when it is acting as the initial HRA for a family. It will follow the rules and policies in section 10-II.C when it is acting as the receiving HRA for a family.

In administering portability, the initial HRA and the receiving HRA must comply with financial procedures required by HUD, including the use of HUD-required forms [24 CFR 982.355(e)(5)].

HRAs must also comply with billing and payment deadlines. HUD may reduce an administrative fee to an initial or receiving HRA if the HRA does not comply with HUD portability requirements [24 CFR 982.355(e)(7)].

## **10-II.B. INITIAL HRA ROLE**

### **Allowable Moves under Portability**

A family may move with voucher assistance only to an area where there is at least one HRA administering a voucher program [24 CFR 982.353(b)]. If there is more than one HRA in the area, the initial HRA provides the family with the contact information for the receiving HRAs that serve the area, and the family selects the receiving HRA. The family must inform the initial HRA which HRA it has selected. If the family prefers not to select the receiving HRA, the initial HRA will select the receiving HRA on behalf of the family [24 CFR 982.255(b)].

Applicant families that have been issued vouchers as well as participant families may qualify to lease a unit outside the HRA's jurisdiction under portability. HUD regulations and HRA policy determine whether a family qualifies.

### ***Applicant Families***

Under HUD regulations, most applicant families qualify to lease a unit outside the HRA's jurisdiction under portability. However, HUD gives the HRA discretion to deny a portability move by an applicant family for the same two reasons that it may deny any move by a participant family: insufficient funding and grounds for denial or termination of assistance. If an HRA intends to deny a family permission to move under portability due to insufficient funding, the HRA must notify HUD within 10 business days of the determination to deny the move [24 CFR 982.355(e)].

#### HRA Policy

In determining whether or not to deny an applicant family permission to move under portability because the HRA lacks sufficient funding or has grounds for denying assistance to the family, the initial HRA will follow the policies established in section 10-I.B of this chapter. If the HRA does deny the move due to insufficient funding, the HRA will notify HUD in writing within 10 business days of the HRA's determination to deny the move.

In addition, the HRA may establish a policy denying the right to portability to nonresident applicants during the first 12 months after they are admitted to the program [24 CFR 982.353(c)].

#### HRA Policy

If neither the head of household nor the spouse/cohead of an applicant family had a domicile (legal residence) in the HRA's jurisdiction at the time that the family's initial application for assistance was submitted, the family must lease a unit within the initial HRA's jurisdiction for at least 12 months before requesting portability.

The HRA will consider exceptions to this policy for reasons related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

### ***Participant Families***

The initial HRA must not provide portable assistance for a participant if a family has moved out of its assisted unit in violation of the lease [24 CFR 982.353(b)]. The Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) creates an exception to this prohibition for families who are otherwise in compliance with program obligations but have moved to protect the health or safety of a family member who is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and who reasonably believed he or she was imminently threatened by harm from further violence if he or she remained in the unit [24 CFR 982.353(b)].

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will determine whether a participant family may move out of the HRA's jurisdiction with continued assistance in accordance with the regulations and policies set forth here and in sections 10-I.A and 10-I.B of this chapter. The HRA will notify the family of its determination in accordance with the approval policy set forth in section 10-I.C of this chapter.

### **Determining Income Eligibility**

#### ***Applicant Families***

An applicant family may lease a unit in a particular area under portability only if the family is income eligible for admission to the voucher program in that area [24 CFR 982.353(d)(1)]. The family must specify the area to which the family wishes to move [24 CFR 982.355(c)(1)].

The initial HRA is responsible for determining whether the family is income eligible in the area to which the family wishes to move [24 CFR 982.353(d)(1), 24 CFR 982.355(9)]. If the applicant family is not income eligible in that area, the HRA must inform the family that it may not move there and receive voucher assistance [Notice PIH 2016-09].

#### ***Participant Families***

The income eligibility of a participant family is not redetermined if the family moves to a new jurisdiction under portability [24 CFR 982.353(d)(2)].

### **Reexamination of Family Income and Composition**

No new reexamination of family income and composition is required for an applicant family.

#### **HRA Policy**

For a participant family approved to move out of its jurisdiction under portability, the HRA generally will conduct a reexamination of family income and composition only if the family's annual reexamination must be completed on or before the initial billing deadline specified on form HUD-52665, Family Portability Information.

The HRA will make any exceptions to this policy necessary to remain in compliance with HUD regulations.



## **Briefing**

The regulations and policies on briefings set forth in Chapter 5 of this plan require the HRA to provide information on portability to all applicant families that qualify to lease a unit outside the HRA's jurisdiction under the portability procedures. Therefore, no special briefing is required for these families.

### HRA Policy

No formal briefing will be required for a participant family wishing to move outside the HRA's jurisdiction under portability. However, the HRA will provide the family with the same oral and written explanation of portability that it provides to applicant families selected for admission to the program (see Chapter 5).

The HRA will provide the name, address, and phone of the contact for the HRAs in the jurisdiction to which they wish to move. If there is more than one HRA with jurisdiction over the area to which the family wishes to move, the HRA will advise the family that the family selects the receiving HRA and notify the initial HRA of which receiving HRA was selected. The HRA will provide the family with contact information for all of the receiving HRAs that serve the area. The HRA will not provide any additional information about receiving HRAs in the area. The HRA will further inform the family that if the family prefers not to select the receiving HRA, the initial HRA will select the receiving HRA on behalf of the family. In this case, the HRA will not provide the family with information for all receiving HRAs in the area.

The HRA will advise the family that they will be under the RHA's policies and procedures, including screening, subsidy standards, voucher extension policies, and payment standards.

## **Voucher Issuance and Term**

An applicant family has no right to portability until after the family has been issued a voucher [24 CFR 982.353(b)]. In issuing vouchers to applicant families, the HRA will follow the regulations and procedures set forth in Chapter 5.

### HRA Policy

For participating families approved to move under portability, the HRA will issue a new voucher within 10 business days of the HRA's written approval to move.

The initial term of the voucher will be 60 days.

## **Voucher Extensions and Expiration**

### HRA Policy

The HRA will approve **no** extensions to a voucher issued to an applicant or participant family porting out of the HRA's jurisdiction except under the following circumstances: (a) the initial term of the voucher will expire before the portable family will be issued a voucher by the receiving HRA, (b) the family decides to return to the initial HRA's jurisdiction and search for a unit there, or (c) the family decides to search for a unit in a third HRA's jurisdiction. In such cases, the policies on voucher extensions set forth in Chapter 5, section 5-II.E, of this plan will apply, including the requirement that the family apply for an extension in writing prior to the expiration of the initial voucher term.

To receive or continue receiving assistance under the initial HRA's voucher program, a family that moves to another HRA's jurisdiction under portability must be under HAP contract in the receiving HRA's jurisdiction within 90 days following the expiration date of the initial HRA's voucher term (including any extensions). (See below under "Initial Billing Deadline" for one exception to this policy.)

### **Preapproval Contact with the Receiving HRA**

Prior to approving a family's request to move under portability, the initial HRA must contact the receiving HRA via email or other confirmed delivery method to determine whether the receiving HRA will administer or absorb the family's voucher. Based on the receiving HRA's response, the initial HRA must determine whether it will approve or deny the move [24 CFR 982.355(c)(3)].

### HRA Policy

The HRA will use email, when possible, to contact the receiving HRA regarding whether the receiving HRA will administer or absorb the family's voucher.

### **Initial Notification to the Receiving HRA**

After approving a family's request to move under portability, the initial HRA must promptly notify the receiving HRA via email or other confirmed delivery method to expect the family [24 CFR 982.355(c)(3); 24 CFR 982.355(c)(7)]. The initial HRA must also advise the family how to contact and request assistance from the receiving HRA [24 CFR 982.355(c)(6)].

### HRA Policy

Because the portability process is time-sensitive, the HRA will notify the receiving HRA by phone, fax, or email to expect the family. The initial HRA will also ask the receiving HRA to provide any information the family may need upon arrival, including the name, fax, email address, and telephone number of the staff person responsible for business with incoming portable families and procedures related to appointments for voucher issuance. The HRA will pass this information along to the family. The HRA will also ask for the name, address, telephone number, fax and email of the person responsible for processing the billing information.

## **Sending Documentation to the Receiving HRA**

The initial HRA is required to send the receiving HRA the following documents:

- Form HUD-52665, Family Portability Information, with Part I filled out [Notice PIH 2016-09]
- A copy of the family's voucher [Notice PIH 2016-09]
- A copy of the family's most recent form HUD-50058, Family Report, or, if necessary in the case of an applicant family, family and income information in a format similar to that of form HUD-50058 [24 CFR 982.355(c)(7), Notice PIH 2016-09]
- Copies of the income verifications backing up the form HUD-50058, including a copy of the family's current EIV data [24 CFR 982.355(c)(7), Notice PIH 2016-09]

### HRA Policy

In addition to these documents, the HRA will provide the following information, if available, to the receiving HRA:

Social security numbers (SSNs)

Documentation of SSNs for all nonexempt household members whose SSNs have not been verified through the EIV system

Documentation of legal identity

Documentation of citizenship or eligible immigration status

Documentation of participation in the earned income disallowance (EID) benefit

Documentation of participation in a family self-sufficiency (FSS) program

The HRA will notify the family in writing regarding any information provided to the receiving HRA [HCV GB, p. 13-3].

### **Initial Billing Deadline [Notice PIH 2016-09]**

The deadline for submission of initial billing is 90 days following the expiration date of the voucher issued to the family by the initial HRA. In cases where suspension of the voucher delays the initial billing submission, the receiving HRA must notify the initial HRA of delayed billing before the billing deadline and document the delay is due to the suspension. In this case, the initial HRA must extend the billing deadline by 30 days.

If the initial HRA does not receive a billing notice by the deadline and does not intend to honor a late billing submission, it must notify the receiving HRA in writing. The initial HRA may report to HUD the receiving HRA's failure to comply with the deadline.

If the initial HRA will honor the late billing, no action is required.

#### HRA Policy

If the HRA has not received an initial billing notice from the receiving HRA within the billing deadline, it will contact the receiving HRA to inform them that it will not honor a late billing submission and will return any subsequent billings that it receives on behalf of the family. The HRA will send the receiving HRA a written confirmation of its decision by mail, fax or email.

The HRA will allow an exception to this policy if the family includes a person with disabilities and the late billing is a result of a reasonable accommodation granted to the family by the receiving HRA.

### **Monthly Billing Payments [24 CFR 982.355(e), Notice PIH 2016-09]**

If the receiving HRA is administering the family's voucher, the receiving HRA bills the initial HRA for housing assistance payments and administrative fees. When reimbursing for administrative fees, the initial HRA must promptly reimburse the receiving HRA for the lesser of 80 percent of the initial HRA ongoing administrative fee or 100 percent of the receiving HRA's ongoing administrative fee for each program unit under contract on the first day of the month for which the receiving HRA is billing the initial HRA under portability. If the administrative fees are prorated for the HCV program, the proration will apply to the amount of the administrative fee for which the receiving HRA may bill [24 CFR 982.355(e)(2)].

The initial HRA is responsible for making billing payments in a timely manner. The first billing amount is due within 30 calendar days after the initial HRA receives Part II of form HUD-52665 from the receiving HRA. Subsequent payments must be **received** by the receiving HRA no later than the fifth business day of each month. The payments must be provided in a form and manner that the receiving HRA is able and willing to accept.

The initial HRA may not terminate or delay making payments under existing portability billing arrangements as a result of over leasing or funding shortfalls. The HRA must manage its tenant-based program in a manner that ensures that it has the financial ability to provide assistance for families that move out of its jurisdiction under portability and are not absorbed by receiving HRAs as well as for families that remain within its jurisdiction.

#### HRA Policy

The initial HRA will utilize direct deposit to ensure that the payment is received by the deadline unless the receiving HRA notifies the initial HRA that direct deposit is not acceptable to them. If the initial HRA extends the term of the voucher, the receiving HRA's voucher will expire 30 calendar days from the new expiration date of the initial HRA's voucher.

### **Annual Updates of Form HUD-50058**

If the initial HRA is being billed on behalf of a portable family, it should receive an updated form HUD-50058 each year from the receiving HRA. If the initial HRA fails to receive an updated 50058 by the family's annual reexamination date, the initial HRA should contact the receiving HRA to verify the status of the family. The initial HRA must continue paying the receiving HRA based on the last form HUD-50058 received, unless instructed otherwise by HUD. The initial HRA may seek absorption of the vouchers by following steps outlined in Notice PIH 2016-09.

### **Denial or Termination of Assistance [24 CFR 982.355(c)(17)]**

At any time, either the initial HRA or the receiving HRA may make a determination to deny or terminate assistance with the family in accordance with 24 CFR 982.552 and 24 CFR 982.553. (For HRA policies on denial and termination, see Chapters 3 and 12, respectively.)

## **10-II.C. RECEIVING HRA ROLE**

If a family has a right to lease a unit in the receiving HRA's jurisdiction under portability, the receiving HRA must provide assistance for the family [24 CFR 982.355(10)]. HUD may determine in certain instances that an HRA is not required to accept incoming portable families, such as an HRA in a declared disaster area. However, the HRA must have approval in writing from HUD before refusing any incoming portable families [24 CFR 982.355(b)].

Administration of the voucher must be in accordance with the receiving HRA's policies. This requirement also applies to policies of Moving to Work agencies. The receiving HRA procedures and preferences for selection among eligible applicants do not apply to the family, and the receiving HRA waiting list is not used [24 CFR 982.355(c)(10)]. The family's unit, or voucher, size is determined in accordance with the subsidy standards of the receiving HRA [24 CFR 982.355(c)(12)], and the receiving HRA's policies on extensions of the voucher term apply [24 CFR 982.355(c)(14)].

### **Responding to Initial HRA's Request [24 CFR 982.355(c)]**

The receiving HRA must respond via email or other confirmed delivery method to the initial HRA's inquiry to determine whether the family's voucher will be billed or absorbed [24 CFR 982.355(c)(3)]. If the receiving HRA informs the initial HRA that it will be absorbing the voucher, the receiving HRA cannot reverse its decision at a later date without consent of the initial HRA (24 CFR 982.355(c)(4)).

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will use email, when possible, to notify the initial HRA whether it will administer or absorb the family's voucher.

### **Initial Contact with Family**

When a family moves into the HRA's jurisdiction under portability, the family is responsible for promptly contacting the HRA and complying with the HRA's procedures for incoming portable families. The family's failure to comply may result in denial or termination of the receiving HRA's voucher [24 CFR 982.355(c)(8)].

If the voucher issued to the family by the initial HRA has expired, the receiving HRA must contact the initial HRA to determine if it will extend the voucher [24 CFR 982.355(c)(13)]. An informal hearing is not required when a voucher has expired without the family leasing a unit.

If for any reason the receiving HRA refuses to process or provide assistance to a family under the portability procedures, the family must be given the opportunity for an informal review or hearing [Notice PIH 2016-09]. (For more on this topic, see later under "Denial or Termination of Assistance.")

## **Briefing**

HUD allows the receiving HRA to require a briefing for an incoming portable family as long as the requirement does not unduly delay the family's search [Notice PIH 2016-09].

### HRA Policy

The HRA will not require the family to attend a briefing. The HRA will provide the family with a briefing packet (as described in Chapter 5) and, in an individual briefing, will orally inform the family about the HRA's payment and subsidy standards, procedures for requesting approval of a unit, the unit inspection process, and the leasing process. The HRA will suggest that the family attend a full briefing at a later date.

## **Income Eligibility and Reexamination**

The receiving HRA does not redetermine eligibility for a portable family that was already receiving assistance in the initial HRA's voucher program [24 CFR 982.355(c)(9)]. If the receiving HRA opts to conduct a new reexamination for a current participant family, the receiving HRA may not delay issuing the family a voucher or otherwise delay approval of a unit [24 CFR 982.355(c)(11)].

### HRA Policy

For any family moving into its jurisdiction under portability, the HRA will conduct a new reexamination of family income and composition. However, the HRA will not delay issuing the family a voucher for this reason. Nor will the HRA delay approving a unit for the family until the reexamination process is complete unless the family is an applicant and the HRA cannot otherwise confirm that the family is income eligible for admission to the program in the area where the unit is located.

In conducting its own reexamination, the HRA will rely upon any verifications provided by the initial HRA to the extent that they (a) accurately reflect the family's current circumstances and (b) were obtained within the last 120 days. Any new information may be verified by documents provided by the family and adjusted, if necessary, when third party verification is received.

## **Voucher Issuance**

When a family moves into its jurisdiction under portability, the receiving HRA is required to issue the family a voucher [24 CFR 982.355(c)(13)]. The family must submit a request for tenancy approval to the receiving HRA during the term of the receiving HRA's voucher [24 CFR 982.355(c)(15)].

### ***Timing of Voucher Issuance***

HUD expects the receiving HRA to issue the voucher within two weeks after receiving the family's paperwork from the initial HRA if the information is in order, the family has contacted the receiving HRA, and the family complies with the receiving HRA's procedures [Notice PIH 2016-09].

#### **HRA Policy**

When a family ports into its jurisdiction, the HRA will issue the family a voucher based on the paperwork provided by the initial HRA unless the family's paperwork from the initial HRA is incomplete, the family's voucher from the initial HRA has expired or the family does not comply with the HRA's procedures. The HRA will update the family's information when verification has been completed.

### ***Voucher Term***

The term of the receiving HRA's voucher may not expire before 30 calendar days from the expiration of the initial HRA's voucher [24 CFR 982.355(c)(13)]. If the initial HRA extends the term of the voucher, the receiving HRA's voucher may not expire before 30 days from the new expiration date of the initial HRA's voucher [Notice PIH 2016-09].

#### **HRA Policy**

The receiving HRA's voucher will expire 30 calendar days from the expiration date of the initial HRA's voucher. If the initial HRA extends the term of the voucher, the receiving HRA's voucher will expire 30 calendar days from the new expiration date of the initial HRA's voucher.

### ***Voucher Extensions [24 CFR 982.355(c)(14), Notice 2016-09]***

Once the receiving HRA issues the portable family a voucher, the receiving HRA's policies on extensions of the voucher term apply. The receiving HRA must inform the initial HRA of any extension granted to the term of the voucher. It must also bear in mind the billing deadline provided by the initial HRA. Unless willing and able to absorb the family, the receiving HRA should ensure that any voucher expiration date would leave sufficient time to process a request for tenancy approval, execute a HAP contract, and deliver the initial billing to the initial HRA.

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA generally will not extend the term of the voucher that it issues to an incoming portable family unless the HRA plans to absorb the family into its own program, in which case it will follow the policies on voucher extension set forth in section 5-II.E.

The HRA will consider an exception to this policy as a reasonable accommodation to a person with disabilities (see Chapter 2).



### ***Voucher Suspensions [24 CFR 982.303, 24 CFR 982.355(c)(15)]***

If the family submits a request for tenancy approval during the term of the receiving HRA's voucher, the HRA must suspend the term of that voucher. The term of the voucher stops from the date that the family submits a request for HRA approval of the tenancy until the date the HRA notifies the family in writing whether the request has been approved or denied [24 CFR 982.4(b)] (see Section 5-II.E).

### **Notifying the Initial HRA**

The receiving HRA must promptly notify the initial HRA if the family has leased an eligible unit under the program or if the family fails to submit a request for tenancy approval for an eligible unit within the term of the receiving HRA's voucher [24 CFR 982.355(c)(16)]. The receiving HRA is required to use Part II of form HUD-52665, Family Portability Information, for this purpose [Notice PIH 2016-09]. (For more on this topic and the deadline for notification, see below under "Administering a Portable Family's Voucher.")

If an incoming portable family ultimately decides not to lease in the jurisdiction of the receiving HRA but instead wishes to return to the initial HRA's jurisdiction or to search in another jurisdiction, the receiving HRA must refer the family back to the initial HRA. In such a case the voucher of record for the family is once again the voucher originally issued by the initial HRA. Any extension of search time provided by the receiving HRA's voucher is only valid for the family's search in the receiving HRA's jurisdiction [Notice PIH 2016-09].

### **Administering a Portable Family's Voucher**

#### ***Portability Billing [24 CFR 982.355(e)]***

To cover assistance for a portable family that was not absorbed, the receiving HRA bills the initial HRA for housing assistance payments and administrative fees. The amount of the housing assistance payment for a portable family in the receiving HRA's program is determined in the same manner as for other families in the receiving HRA's program.

The receiving HRA may bill the initial HRA for the lesser of 80 percent of the initial HRA's ongoing administrative fee or 100 percent of the receiving HRA's ongoing administrative fee for each program unit under contract on the first day of the month for which the receiving HRA is billing the initial HRA under portability. If the administrative fees are prorated for the HCV program, the proration will apply to the amount of the administrative fee for which the receiving HRA may bill (i.e., the receiving HRA may bill for the lesser of 80 percent of the initial HRA's prorated ongoing administrative fee or 100 percent of the receiving HRA's ongoing administrative fee).

If both HRAs agree, the HRAs may negotiate a different amount of reimbursement.

#### **HRA Policy**

Unless the HRA negotiates a different amount of reimbursement with the initial HRA, the HRA will bill the initial HRA the maximum amount of administrative fees allowed, ensuring any administrative fee proration has been properly applied.

### ***Initial Billing Deadline***

If a portable family's search for a unit is successful and the receiving HRA intends to administer the family's voucher, the receiving HRA must submit its initial billing notice (Part II of form HUD-52665) in time that the notice will be **received** no later than 90 days following the expiration date of the family's voucher issued by the initial HRA [Notice PIH 2016-09]. This deadline may be extended for 30 additional days if the delay is due to suspension of the voucher's term (see Initial Billing Section). A copy of the family's form HUD-50058, Family Report, completed by the receiving HRA must be attached to the initial billing notice. The receiving HRA may send these documents by mail, fax, or email.

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will send its initial billing notice by fax or email to meet the billing deadline.

If the receiving HRA fails to send the initial billing by the deadline, it is required to absorb the family into its own program unless (a) the initial HRA is willing to accept the late submission or (b) HUD requires the initial HRA to honor the late submission (e.g., because the receiving HRA is over leased) [Notice PIH 2016-09].

### ***Ongoing Notification Responsibilities [Notice PIH 2016-09, HUD-52665]***

**Annual Reexamination.** The receiving HRA must send the initial HRA a copy of a portable family's updated form HUD-50058 after each annual reexamination for the duration of time the receiving HRA is billing the initial HRA on behalf of the family, regardless of whether there is a change in the billing amount.

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will send a copy of the updated HUD-50058 by fax or email no later than 10 business days after the effective date of the reexamination.

**Change in Billing Amount.** The receiving HRA is required to notify the initial HRA, using form HUD-52665, of any change in the billing amount for the family as a result of:

- A change in the HAP amount (because of a reexamination, a change in the applicable payment standard, a move to another unit, etc.)
- An abatement or subsequent resumption of the HAP payments
- Termination of the HAP contract
- Payment of a damage/vacancy loss claim for the family
- Termination of the family from the program

The timing of the notice of the change in the billing amount should correspond with the notification to the owner and the family in order to provide the initial HRA with advance notice of the change. Under no circumstances should the notification be later than 10 business days following the effective date of the change in the billing amount. If the receiving HRA fails to send Form HUD-52665 within 10 days of effective date of billing changes, the initial HRA is not responsible for any increase prior to notification. If the change resulted in a decrease in the monthly billing amount, the initial HRA will offset future monthly payments until the difference is reconciled.

#### ***Late Payments [Notice PIH 2016-09]***

If the initial HRA fails to make a monthly payment for a portable family by the fifth business day of the month, the receiving HRA must promptly notify the initial HRA in writing of the deficiency. The notice must identify the family, the amount of the billing payment, the date the billing payment was due, and the date the billing payment was received (if it arrived late). The receiving HRA must send a copy of the notification to the Office of Public Housing (OPH) in the HUD area office with jurisdiction over the receiving HRA. If the initial HRA fails to correct the problem by the second month following the notification, the receiving HRA may request by memorandum to the director of the OPH with jurisdiction over the receiving HRA that HUD transfer the unit in question. A copy of the initial notification and any subsequent correspondence between the HRAs on the matter must be attached. The receiving HRA must send a copy of the memorandum to the initial HRA. If the OPH decides to grant the transfer, the billing arrangement on behalf of the family ceases with the transfer, but the initial HRA is still responsible for any outstanding payments due to the receiving HRA.

#### ***Overpayments [Notice PIH 2016-09]***

In all cases where the receiving HRA has received billing payments for billing arrangements no longer in effect, the receiving HRA is responsible for returning the full amount of the overpayment (including the portion provided for administrative fees) to the initial HRA.

In the event that HUD determines billing payments have continued for at least three months because the receiving HRA failed to notify the initial HRA that the billing arrangement was terminated, the receiving HRA must take the following steps:

- Return the full amount of the overpayment, including the portion provided for administrative fees, to the initial HRA.
- Once full payment has been returned, notify the Office of Public Housing in the HUD area office with jurisdiction over the receiving HRA of the date and the amount of reimbursement to the initial HRA.

At HUD's discretion, the receiving HRA will be subject to the sanctions spelled out in Notice PIH 2016-09.

### ***Denial or Termination of Assistance***

At any time, the receiving HRA may make a determination to deny or terminate assistance to a portable family for family action or inaction [24 CFR 982.355(c)(17)].

In the case of a termination, the HRA should provide adequate notice of the effective date to the initial HRA to avoid having to return a payment. In no event should the receiving HRA fail to notify the initial HRA later than 10 business days following the effective date of the termination of the billing arrangement [HUD-52665; Notice PIH 2016-09].

#### **HRA Policy**

If the HRA elects to deny or terminate assistance for a portable family, the HRA will notify the initial HRA within 10 business days after the informal review or hearing if the denial or termination is upheld. The HRA will base its denial or termination decision on the policies set forth in Chapter 3 or Chapter 12, respectively. The informal review or hearing will be held in accordance with the policies in Chapter 16. The receiving HRA will furnish the initial HRA with a copy of the review or hearing decision.

## **Absorbing a Portable Family**

The receiving HRA may absorb an incoming portable family into its own program when the HRA executes a HAP contract on behalf of the family or at any time thereafter providing that the HRA has funding available under its annual contributions contract (ACC) [24 CFR 982.355(d)(1), Notice PIH 2016-09].

If the receiving HRA absorbs a family from the point of admission, the admission will be counted against the income targeting obligation of the receiving HRA [24 CFR 982.201(b)(2)(vii)].

If the receiving HRA absorbs a family after providing assistance for the family under a billing arrangement with the initial HRA, the receiving HRA must send an updated form HUD-52665 to the initial HRA no later than 10 business days following the effective date of the termination of the billing arrangement [Notice PIH 2016-09].

### HRA Policy

If the HRA decides to absorb a portable family upon the execution of a HAP contract on behalf of the family, the HRA will notify the initial HRA by the initial billing deadline specified on form HUD-52665. The effective date of the HAP contract will be the effective date of the absorption.

If the HRA decides to absorb a family after that, it will provide the initial HRA with 30 days' advance notice, but no later than 10 business days following the effective date of the termination of the billing arrangement.

Following the absorption of an incoming portable family, the family is assisted with funds available under the consolidated ACC for the receiving HRA's voucher program [24 CFR 982.355(d)], and the receiving HRA becomes the initial HRA in any subsequent moves by the family under portability [24 CFR 982.355(e)(4)].

## Chapter 11

### REEXAMINATIONS

#### INTRODUCTION

The HRA is required to reexamine each family's income and composition at least annually, and to adjust the family's level of assistance accordingly. Interim reexaminations are also needed in certain situations. This chapter discusses both annual and interim reexaminations, and the recalculation of family share and subsidy that occurs as a result. HUD regulations and HRA policies concerning reexaminations are presented in three parts:

Part I: Annual Reexaminations. This part discusses the process for conducting annual reexaminations.

Part II: Interim Reexaminations. This part details the requirements for families to report changes in family income and composition between annual reexaminations.

Part III: Recalculating Family Share and Subsidy Amount. This part discusses the recalculation of family share and subsidy amounts based on the results of annual and interim reexaminations.

Policies governing reasonable accommodation, family privacy, required family cooperation, and program abuse, as described elsewhere in this plan, apply to both annual and interim reexaminations.



## **PART I: ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS [24 CFR 982.516]**

### **11-I.A. OVERVIEW**

The HRA must conduct a reexamination of family income and composition at least annually. This includes gathering and verifying current information about family composition, income, and expenses. Based on this updated information, the family's income and rent must be recalculated. This part discusses the schedule for annual reexaminations, the information to be collected and verified, and annual reexamination effective dates.

### **11-I.B STREAMLINED ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS [24 CFR 982.516(b)]**

HUD permits HRAs 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 HRA may determine income from fixed sources by applying a verified cost of living adjustment (COLA) or rate of interest. The HRA may, however, obtain third-party verification of all income, regardless of the source. Further, upon request of the family, the HRA 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 HRA may streamline the verification of fixed income but is not required to verify non-fixed income amounts. If the family receives less than 90 percent of its income from fixed sources, the HRA may streamline the verification of fixed income and must verify non-fixed income annually.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA chooses not to streamline the annual reexamination process for fixed-income sources. The HRA will obtain third-party verification of all sources of income annually.



## **11-I.C. SCHEDULING ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS**

The HRA must establish a policy to ensure that the annual reexamination for each family is completed *within* a 12-month period, and may require reexaminations more frequently [HCV GB p. 12-1].

### HRA Policy

The HRA will begin the annual reexamination process 120 days in advance of its scheduled effective date. Generally, the HRA will schedule annual reexamination effective dates to coincide with the family's anniversary 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 moves to a new unit, the HRA will not perform a new annual reexamination.

The HRA also may schedule an annual reexamination for completion prior to the anniversary date for administrative purposes.

## **Notification of and Participation in the Annual Reexamination Process**

The HRA is required to obtain the information needed to conduct annual reexaminations. How that information will be collected is left to the discretion of the HRA. However, HRAs should give tenants who were not provided the opportunity the option to complete Form HUD-92006 at this time [Notice PIH 2009-36].

### HRA Policy

Annual reexaminations will be conducted by mail. Notification of the annual reexamination will be sent by first-class mail and will inform the family of the information and documentation that must be provided to the HRA, and the deadline for providing it. Documents will be accepted by mail, by email, by fax, or in-person.

If the notice is returned by the post office with no forwarding address, a notice of termination (see Chapter 12) will be sent to the family's address of record, as well as to any alternate address provided in the family's file.

An interview will be scheduled if the family requests assistance in providing information or documentation requested by the HRA.

If the family is unable to attend a scheduled interview, the family should contact the HRA in advance of the interview to schedule a new appointment. If a family does not attend the scheduled interview, the HRA will send a second notification with a new interview appointment time.

Families that fail to attend two scheduled interviews without HRA approval will be sent a notice of termination in accordance with policies contained in Chapter 12.

An advocate, interpreter, or other assistant may assist the family in the interview process. The family and the HRA must execute a certification attesting to the role and assistance of any such third party.

## **11-I.D. CONDUCTING ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS**

As part of the annual reexamination process, families are required to provide updated information to the HRA regarding the family's income, expenses, and composition [24 CFR 982.551(b)].

### HRA Policy

Families will be asked to supply all required information (as described in the reexamination notice) before the deadline specified in the notice. The required information will include an HRA-designated reexamination form, an Authorization for the Release of Information/Privacy Act Notice, as well as supporting documents or forms related to the family's income, expenses, and family composition.

The HRA will notify the family in writing if any required documentation or information is missing. The missing information or documentation must be provided within 10 business days of the date the HRA notifies the family. 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 period (plus any extensions), the family will be sent a notice of termination (see Chapter 12).

If the family requests or the HRA schedules an in-person interview, families will be asked to bring all required information (as described in the reexamination notice) to the reexamination appointment.

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 period (plus any extensions), the family will be sent a notice of termination (see Chapter 12).

Additionally, HUD recommends that at annual reexaminations HRAs 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].

### HRA Policy

At the annual reexamination, the HRA 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 HRA will use the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender database to verify the information provided by the tenant.

If the HRA proposes to terminate assistance based on lifetime sex offender registration information, the HRA 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 12.)

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 HRA 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

If adding a new family member to the unit causes overcrowding according to the housing quality standards (HQS) (see Chapter 8), the HRA must issue the family a new voucher, and the family and HRA must try to find an acceptable unit as soon as possible. If an acceptable unit is available for rental by the family, the HRA must terminate the HAP contract in accordance with its terms [24 CFR 982.403].

## **11-I.E. DETERMINING ONGOING ELIGIBILITY OF CERTAIN STUDENTS [24 CFR 982.552(b)(5)]**

Section 327 of Public Law 109-115 established new restrictions on the ongoing eligibility of certain students (both part- and full-time) who are enrolled in institutions of higher education.

If a student enrolled in an institution of higher education is under the age of 24, is not a veteran, is not married, does not have a dependent child, and is not a person with disabilities receiving HCV assistance as of November 30, 2005, the student's eligibility must be reexamined along with the income eligibility of the student's parents on an annual basis. In these cases, both the student and the student's parents must be income eligible for the student to continue to receive HCV assistance. If, however, a student in these circumstances is determined independent from his or her parents or is considered a *vulnerable youth* in accordance with HRA policy, the income of the student's parents will not be considered in determining the student's ongoing eligibility.

Students who reside with parents in an HCV assisted unit are not subject to this provision. It is limited to students who are receiving assistance on their own, separately from their parents.

### HRA Policy

During the annual reexamination process, the HRA will determine the ongoing eligibility of each student who is subject to the eligibility restrictions in 24 CFR 5.612 by reviewing the student's individual income as well as the income of the student's parents. If the student has been determined "independent" from his/her parents or is considered a *vulnerable youth* based on the policies in Sections 3-II.E and 7-II.E, the parents' income will not be reviewed.

If the student is no longer income eligible based on his/her own income or the income of his/her parents, the student's assistance will be terminated in accordance with the policies in Section 12-I.D.

If the student continues to be income eligible based on his/her own income and the income of his/her parents (if applicable), the HRA will process a reexamination in accordance with the policies in this chapter.

## 11-I.F. EFFECTIVE DATES

The HRA must establish policies concerning the effective date of changes that result from an annual reexamination [24 CFR 982.516].

### HRA Policy

In general, an *increase* in the family share of the 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.

If the HRA 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 HRA, but will always allow for the 30-day notice period.

If the family causes a delay in processing the annual reexamination, *increases* in the family share of the rent will be applied retroactively, to the scheduled effective date of the annual reexamination. The family will be responsible for any overpaid subsidy and may be offered a repayment agreement in accordance with the policies in Chapter 16.

In general, a *decrease* in the family share of the rent that results from an annual reexamination will take effect on the family's anniversary date.

If a family moves to a new unit, the decrease will take effect on the effective date of the new lease and HAP contract.

If the HRA 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 HRA.

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.

Delays in reexamination processing are considered to be caused by the family if the family fails to provide information requested by the HRA by the date specified, and this delay prevents the HRA from completing the reexamination as scheduled.

## **PART II: INTERIM REEXAMINATIONS [24 CFR 982.516]**

### **11-II.A. OVERVIEW**

Family circumstances may change between annual reexaminations. HUD and HRA policies dictate what kinds of information about changes in family circumstances must be reported, and under what circumstances the HRA must process interim reexaminations to reflect those changes. HUD regulations also permit the HRA to conduct interim reexaminations of income or family composition at any time. When an interim reexamination is conducted, only those factors that have changed are verified and adjusted [HCV GB, p. 12-10].

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 changes. The HRA must complete the interim reexamination within a reasonable time after the family's request.

This part includes HUD and HRA policies describing what changes families are required to report, what changes families may choose to report, and how the HRA will process both HRA- and family-initiated interim reexaminations.

### **11-II.B. CHANGES IN FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION**

The family is required to report all changes in family composition. The HRA must adopt policies prescribing when and under what conditions the family must report changes in income and family composition. However, due to family obligations under the program, the HRA has limited discretion in this area.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will conduct interim reexaminations to account for any changes in household composition that occur between annual reexaminations.

#### **New Family Members Not Requiring HRA Approval**

The addition of a family member as a result of birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody does not require HRA approval. However, the family is required to promptly notify the HRA of the addition [24 CFR 982.551(h)(2)].

#### HRA Policy

The family must inform the HRA of the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child in writing within 10 business 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 HRA approval to add a new family member [24 CFR 982.551(h)(2)] or other household member (live-in aide or foster child) [24 CFR 982.551(h)(4)].

When any new family member is added, the HRA must make appropriate adjustments in the family share of the rent and the HAP payment at the effective date of either the annual or interim reexamination [24 CFR 982.516(e)(2)].

If a change in family size causes a violation of Housing Quality Standards (HQS) space standards (see Chapter 8), the HRA must issue the family a new voucher, and the family and HRA must try to find an acceptable unit as soon as possible. If an acceptable unit is available for rental by the family, the HRA must terminate the family's HAP contract in accordance with its terms [24 CFR 982.403].

### HRA Policy

Families must request HRA and landlord 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 10 consecutive days or 30 cumulative days within a 12-month period and therefore no longer qualifies as a "guest." Requests must be made in writing and approved by the HRA and landlord prior to the individual moving into the unit.

The HRA will not approve the addition of a new family or household member unless the individual meets the HRA's eligibility criteria (see Chapter 3) and documentation requirements (see Chapter 7, Part II).

The HRA will not approve the addition of a foster child or foster adult if it will cause a violation of HQS space standards.

The HRA will not approve to add a new family member, live-in aide, foster child or foster adult unless the landlord also approves the new family or household member.

If the HRA determines an individual meets the HRA's eligibility criteria and documentation requirements, the HRA will provide written approval to the family. If the approval of a new family member or live-in aide will cause overcrowding according to HQS standards, the approval letter will explain that the family will be issued a voucher and will be required to move.

If the HRA determines that an individual does not meet the HRA's eligibility criteria or documentation requirements, the HRA 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 HRA 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**

Families must promptly notify the HRA if any family member no longer lives in the unit [24 CFR 982.551(h)(3)]. Because household members are considered when determining the family unit (voucher) size [24 CFR 982.402], the HRA also needs to know when any live-in aide, foster child, or foster adult ceases to reside in the unit.

**HRA Policy**

If a household member ceases to reside in the unit, the family must inform the HRA within 10 business days. This requirement also applies to a family member who has been considered temporarily absent at the point that the family concludes the individual is permanently absent.



## **11-II.C. CHANGES AFFECTING INCOME OR EXPENSES**

Interim reexaminations can be scheduled either because the HRA 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 HRA may take different actions depending on whether the family reported the change voluntarily, or because it was required to do so.

### **HRA-Initiated Interim Reexaminations**

HRA-initiated interim reexaminations are those that are scheduled based on circumstances or criteria defined by the HRA. They are not scheduled because of changes reported by the family.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will conduct interim reexaminations in each of the following instances:

For families receiving the Earned Income Disallowance (EID), the HRA will conduct an interim reexamination at the start, second 12-month exclusion, and conclusion of the 24-month eligibility period.

If the family has reported zero income, the HRA will conduct an interim reexamination every 3 months as long as the family continues to report that they have no income.

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 HRA 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 HRA will conduct an interim reexamination.

The HRA 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 HRA must adopt policies prescribing when and under what conditions the family must report changes in family income or expenses [24 CFR 982.516(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 982.516(b)(2)].

### ***Required Reporting***

HUD regulations give the HRA the freedom to determine the circumstances under which families will be required to report changes affecting income.

#### HRA Policy

Families are required to report in writing if their household income increases \$200 or more per month within 10 business days of the change occurring. The HRA will conduct an interim reexamination to recalculate the new family share of rent and new subsidy amount.

### ***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 982.516(b)(2)]. The HRA must process the request if the family reports a change that will result in a reduced family income [HCV GB, p. 12-9].

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.

#### HRA Policy

If a family reports a change that it was not required to report and that would result in an increase in the family share of the rent, the HRA will note the information in the tenant file, but will not conduct an interim reexamination.

If a family reports a change that it was not required to report and that would result in a decrease in the family share of rent, the HRA will conduct an interim reexamination. See Section 11-II.D. for effective dates.

Families may report changes in income or expenses at any time.

## 11-II.D. PROCESSING THE INTERIM REEXAMINATION

### Method of Reporting

#### HRA Policy

The family must notify the HRA of changes in writing using an HRA designated form.

Generally, the family will not be required to attend an interview for an interim reexamination. However, if the HRA determines that an interview is warranted, the family may be required to attend.

Based on the type of change reported, the HRA 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 HRA. This time frame may be extended for good cause with HRA approval. The HRA will accept required documentation by mail, by email, by fax, or in person.

### Effective Dates

The HRA must establish the time frames in which any changes that result from an interim reexamination will take effect [24 CFR 982.516(d)]. The changes may be applied either retroactively or prospectively, depending on whether there is to be an increase or a decrease in the family share of the rent, and whether the family reported any required information within the required time frames [HCV GB, p. 12-10].

#### HRA 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 overpaid subsidy 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*:

The HRA requires interim decreases to be reported and all required documentation submitted by the 21<sup>st</sup> of the month in order to be effective on the first day of the following month. In cases where the change cannot be verified until after the date the change would have become effective, the change will be made retroactively.

If the decrease is based on the family's voluntary decrease in hours or income and there is a previous increase that has not been applied (i.e. the family share increased and has not been paid at least one month) the decrease will be effective the first of the second month after the rent amount is determined.

## **PART III: RECALCULATING FAMILY SHARE AND SUBSIDY AMOUNT**

### **11-III.A. OVERVIEW**

After gathering and verifying required information for an annual or interim reexamination, the HRA must recalculate the family share of the rent and the subsidy amount, and notify the family and owner of the changes [24 CFR 982.516(d)(2), HCV 12-6 and 12-10]. 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.

### **11-III.B. CHANGES IN PAYMENT STANDARDS AND UTILITY ALLOWANCES**

In order to calculate the family share of the rent and HAP amount correctly, changes in payment standards, subsidy standards, or utility allowances may need to be updated and included in the HRA's calculations.

Specific policies governing how subsidy standards, payment standards, and utility allowances are applied are discussed below.

#### **Payment Standards [24 CFR 982.505]**

The family share of the rent and HAP calculations must use the correct payment standard for the family, taking into consideration the family unit size, the size of unit, and the area in which the unit is located [HCV GB, p. 12-5]. See Chapter 6 for information on how to select the appropriate payment standard.

When the HRA changes its payment standards or the family's situation changes, new payment standards are applied at the following times:

- If the HRA's payment standard amount changes during the term of the HAP contract, the date on which the new standard is applied depends on whether the standard has increased or decreased:
  - If the payment standard amount has *increased*, the increased payment standard will be applied at the *first annual* reexamination following the effective date of the increase in the payment standard.
  - If the payment standard amount has *decreased*, during the term of a HAP contract, the HRA is not required to reduce the payment standard as the HAP contract remains in effect. At the family's *second annual* reexamination, the HRA may, but is not required to, apply the decreased payment standard or may gradually implement the reduced payment standard (See Chapter 6 for the HRA's policy on decreases in the payment standard).
- If the family moves to a new unit, or a new HAP contract is executed due to changes in the lease (even if the family remains in place) the current payment standard applicable to the family will be used when the new HAP contract is processed.

### **Subsidy Standards [24 CFR 982.505(c)(4)]**

If there is a change in the family unit size that would apply to a family during the HAP contract term, either due to a change in family composition, or a change in the HRA's subsidy standards (see Chapter 5), the new family unit size must be used to determine the payment standard amount for the family at the family's *first annual* reexamination following the change in family unit size.

### **Utility Allowances [24 CFR 982.517(d)]**

The family share of the rent and HAP calculations must reflect any changes in the family's utility arrangement with the owner, or in the HRA's utility allowance schedule [HCV GB, p. 12-5]. Chapter 16 discusses how utility allowance schedules are established.

When there are changes in the utility arrangement with the owner, the HRA must use the utility allowances in effect at the time the new lease and HAP contract are executed.

At reexamination, the HRA must use the HRA current utility allowance schedule [HCV GB, p. 18-8].

#### HRA Policy

Revised utility allowances will be applied to a family's rent and subsidy calculations at the first annual reexamination after the allowance is adopted [HCV GB, p. 18-9].

### **11-III.C. NOTIFICATION OF NEW FAMILY SHARE AND HAP AMOUNT**

The HRA must notify the owner and family of any changes in the amount of the HAP payment [HUD-52641, HAP Contract]. The notice must include the following information [HCV GB, p. 12-6]:

- The amount and effective date of the new HAP payment
- The amount and effective date of the new family share of the rent
- The amount and effective date of the new tenant rent to owner

The family must be given an opportunity for an informal hearing regarding the HRA's determination of their annual or adjusted income, and the use of such income to compute the housing assistance payment [24 CFR 982.555(a)(1)(i)] (see Chapter 16).

#### HRA Policy

The notice to the family will include the annual and adjusted income amounts that were used to calculate the family share of the rent and the housing assistance payment.

The notice will state the family has the right to request an explanation of how the assistance was calculated and if the family disagrees, they have the right to informal hearing. The notice will include the procedures for requesting an informal hearing.

#### **11-III.D. DISCREPANCIES**

During an annual or interim reexamination, the HRA may discover that information previously reported by the family was in error, or that the family intentionally misrepresented information. In addition, the HRA may discover errors made by the HRA. When errors resulting in the overpayment or underpayment of subsidy are discovered, corrections will be made in accordance with the policies in Chapter 13.



## Chapter 12

### TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE AND TENANCY

HUD regulations specify mandatory and optional grounds for which a HRA can terminate a family's assistance. They also specify the circumstances under which an owner may terminate the tenancy of an assisted family. This chapter describes the policies that govern mandatory and optional terminations of assistance, and termination of tenancy by the owner. It is presented in three parts:

Part I: Grounds for Termination of Assistance. This part describes the various circumstances under which assistance under the program can be terminated by the family or by the HRA.

Part II: Approach to Termination of Assistance. This part describes the policies and the process that the HRA will use in evaluating decisions on whether to terminate assistance due to actions or inactions of the family where termination is an option. It specifies the alternatives that the HRA may consider in lieu of termination, the criteria the HRA will use when deciding what action to take, and the steps the HRA must take when terminating a family's assistance.

Part III: Termination of Tenancy by the Owner. This part describes the HUD policies that govern the owner's right to terminate an assisted tenancy.





## **PART I: GROUNDS FOR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE**

### **12-I.A. OVERVIEW**

HUD requires the HRA to terminate assistance for certain actions and inactions of the family and when the family no longer requires assistance due to increases in family income. HUD permits the HRA to terminate assistance for certain other actions or inactions of the family. In addition, a family may decide to withdraw from the program and terminate their HCV assistance at any time by notifying the HRA.

### **12-I.B. FAMILY NO LONGER REQUIRES ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.455]**

As a family's income increases, the amount of the housing assistance payment decreases. If the amount of assistance provided by the HRA is reduced to zero, the family's assistance terminates automatically 180 days after the last HAP payment.

#### HRA Policy

If a participating family receiving zero assistance experiences a change in circumstances that would result in a HAP payment to the owner, the family must notify the HRA of the change and request an interim reexamination before the expiration of the 180-day period.

### **12-I.C. FAMILY CHOOSES TO TERMINATE ASSISTANCE**

The family may request that the HRA terminate housing assistance payments on behalf of the family at any time.

#### HRA Policy

The request to terminate assistance should be made in writing and signed by the head of household, and spouse or cohead if applicable. Before terminating the family's assistance, the HRA will follow the notice requirements in Section 12-II.F.

### **12-I.D. MANDATORY TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE**

HUD requires the HRA to terminate assistance in the following circumstances.

#### **Eviction [24 CFR 982.552(b)(2), 24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)]**

The HRA must terminate assistance whenever a family is evicted from a unit assisted under the HCV program for a serious or repeated violation of the lease. As discussed further in section 12-II.E, 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.

#### HRA Policy

A family will be considered *evicted* if the family moves after a legal eviction order has been issued, whether or not physical enforcement of the order was necessary.

If a family moves after the owner has given the family an eviction notice for serious or repeated lease violations but before a legal eviction order has been issued, termination of assistance is not mandatory. In such cases the HRA will determine whether the family

has committed serious or repeated violations of the lease based on available evidence and may terminate assistance or take any of the alternative measures described in section 12-II.C. In making its decision, the HRA will consider the factors described in sections 12-II.D and 12-II.E. Upon consideration of such factors, the HRA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate assistance.

*Serious and repeated lease violations* will include, but not be limited to, nonpayment of rent, disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property, or living or housekeeping habits that cause damage to the unit or premises and criminal activity. Generally, the criterion to be used will be whether or not the reason for the eviction was the fault of the tenant or guests.

#### **Failure to Provide Consent [24 CFR 982.552(b)(3)]**

The HRA must terminate assistance if any family member fails to sign and submit any consent form they are required to sign for a regular or interim reexamination. See Chapter 7 for a complete discussion of consent requirements.

### **Failure to Document Citizenship [24 CFR 982.552(b)(4) and [24 CFR 5.514(c)]**

The HRA must terminate assistance 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; or (3) a family member, as determined by the HRA, has knowingly permitted another individual who is not eligible for assistance to reside (on a permanent basis) in the unit.

For (3) above, 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.

### **Failure to Disclose and Document Social Security Numbers [24 CFR 5.218(c), Notice PIH 2018-24]**

The HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA determined the family to be noncompliant.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA 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.

### **Methamphetamine Manufacture or Production [24 CFR 982.553(b)(1)(ii)]**

The HRA must terminate assistance if any household member has ever been convicted of the manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.

### **Lifetime Registered Sex Offenders [Notice PIH 2012-28]**

Should a HRA 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 HRA must immediately terminate assistance for the household member.

In this situation, the HRA 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 HRA must terminate assistance for the household.

### **Failure of Students to Meet Ongoing Eligibility Requirements [24 CFR 982.552(b)(5) and FR 4/10/06]**

If a student enrolled at an institution of higher education is under the age of 24, is not a veteran, is not married, does not have dependent children, is not residing with his/her parents in an HCV assisted household, and is not a person with disabilities receiving HCV assistance as of November 30, 2005, the HRA must terminate the student's assistance if, at the time of reexamination, either the student's income or the income of the student's parents (if applicable) exceeds the applicable income limit.

If a participant household consists of both eligible and ineligible students, the eligible students shall not be terminated, but must be issued a voucher to move with continued assistance in accordance with program regulations and HRA policies, or must be given the opportunity to lease in place if the terminated ineligible student members elect to move out of the assisted unit.

### **Death of the Sole Family Member [24 CFR 982.311(d) and Notice PIH 2010-9]**

The HRA must immediately terminate program assistance for deceased single member households.

## **12-I.E. MANDATORY POLICIES AND OTHER AUTHORIZED TERMINATIONS**

### **Mandatory Policies [24 CFR 982.553(b) and 982.551(l)]**

HUD requires the HRA to establish policies that permit the HRA to terminate assistance if the HRA determines that:

- Any household member is currently engaged in any illegal use of a drug, or has a pattern of illegal drug use that interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents
- Any household member's abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents
- Any household member has violated the family's obligation not to engage in any drug-related criminal activity
- Any household member has violated the family's obligation not to engage in violent criminal activity

## ***Use of Illegal Drugs and Alcohol Abuse***

### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will terminate a family's assistance if any household member is currently engaged in any illegal use of a drug, or has a pattern of illegal drug use that interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

The HRA will terminate assistance if any household member's abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

The HRA will not terminate assistance if any member of a current participant household is enrolled in Minnesota's Medical Cannabis Therapeutic Use Program established under Minn. Stat. Sections 152.22 through 152.37. [See Exhibit 3-3, Memorandum from Sandra B. Henriquez, Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing, 2011, Medical Marijuana Use in Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher Programs.] However, the HRA will consider termination of assistance if a household member is utilizing medical marijuana that was not specifically prescribed to them through Minnesota's Medical Cannabis Therapeutic Use Program.

*Currently engaged in* is defined as any use of illegal drugs during the previous three months.

The HRA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests, convictions, or eviction of household members related to the use of illegal drugs or abuse of alcohol.

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 assistance, the HRA will consider alternatives as described in Section 12-II.C and other factors described in Sections 12-II.D and 12-II.E. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the HRA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate assistance.

***Drug-Related and Violent Criminal Activity [24 CFR 5.100]***

*Drug* means a controlled substance as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802).

*Drug-related criminal activity* is 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.

*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.

**HRA Policy**

The HRA will terminate a family's assistance if any household member has violated the family's obligation not to engage in any drug-related or violent criminal activity during participation in the HCV program.

The HRA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests and/or convictions of household members related to drug-related or violent criminal activity, and any eviction or notice to evict based on drug-related or violent 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 assistance, the HRA will consider alternatives as described in Section 12-II.C and other factors described in Sections 12-II.D and 12-II.E. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the HRA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate assistance.

## **Other Authorized Reasons for Termination of Assistance [24 CFR 982.552(c), 24 CFR 5.2005(c)]**

HUD permits the HRA to terminate assistance under a number of other circumstances. It is left to the discretion of the HRA whether such circumstances in general warrant consideration for the termination of assistance. As discussed further in section 12-II.E, the Violence against Women Act of 2013 explicitly prohibits HRAs from considering incidents of, or criminal activity directly related to, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking as reasons for terminating the assistance of a victim of such abuse.

Additionally, per the alternative requirements listed in the *Federal Register* notice dated December 29, 2014, HRAs are no longer permitted to terminate assistance to a family due to the family's failure to meet its obligations under the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) contract of participation [FR Notice 12/29/14].

### HRA Policy

The HRA **will** terminate a family's assistance if:

The family has failed to comply with any family obligations under the program. See Exhibit 12-1 for a listing of family obligations and related HRA policies.

Any family member has been evicted from federally assisted housing in the last five years.

Any family member has committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program.

The family currently owes rent or other amounts to any HRA in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act.

The family has not reimbursed any HRA for amounts the HRA paid to an owner under a HAP contract for rent, damages to the unit, or other amounts owed by the family under the lease.

The family has breached the terms of a repayment agreement entered into with the HRA.



A family member has engaged in or threatened violent or abusive behavior toward HRA personnel.

*Abusive or violent behavior towards HRA 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 assistance, the HRA will consider alternatives as described in Section 12-II.C and other factors described in Sections 12-II.D and 12-II.E. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the HRA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate assistance.

### ***Family Absence from the Unit [24 CFR 982.312]***

The family may be absent from the unit for brief periods. The HRA must establish a policy on how long the family may be absent from the assisted unit. However, the family may not be absent from the unit for a period of more than 180 consecutive calendar days for any reason. Absence in this context means that no member of the family is residing in the unit.

#### **HRA Policy**

If the family is absent from the unit for more than 30 consecutive calendar days, the family's assistance will be terminated. Notice of termination will be sent in accordance with Section 12-II.F.

The family may request permission from the HRA for absences exceeding 30 consecutive calendar days. The request must be made in writing at least 10 business days prior to the absence. Authorized absences may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Prolonged hospitalization
- b. Absences beyond the control of the family (i.e. death in the family, other family member illness)
- c. Other absences that are deemed necessary by the HRA

The HRA will make a determination within 10 business days of the family's request.

### ***Insufficient Funding [24 CFR 982.454]***

The HRA may terminate HAP contracts if the HRA determines, in accordance with HUD requirements, that funding under the consolidated ACC is insufficient to support continued assistance for families in the program.

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will determine whether there is sufficient funding to pay for currently assisted families according to the policies in Part VIII of Chapter 16. If the HRA determines there is a shortage of funding, prior to terminating any HAP contracts, the HRA will determine if any other actions can be taken to reduce program costs.

In the event that the HRA decides to stop issuing vouchers as a result of a funding shortfall, and the HRA is not assisting the required number of special purpose vouchers (NED families, HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) families, and family unification program (FUP) families), when the HRA resumes issuing vouchers, the HRA will issue vouchers first to the special purpose voucher families on its waiting list until it has reached the required number of special purpose vouchers, when applicable.

If after implementing all reasonable cost cutting measures there is not enough funding available to provide continued assistance for current participants, the HRA will terminate HAP contracts as a last resort.

Prior to terminating any HAP contracts, the HRA will inform the local HUD field office. The HRA will terminate the minimum number needed in order to reduce HAP costs to a level within the HRA's annual budget authority.

If the HRA must terminate HAP contracts due to insufficient funding, the HRA will do so in accordance with the following criteria and instructions:

Families comprising the required number of special purpose vouchers, including nonelderly disabled (NED), HUD-Veteran's Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH), and family unification program (FUP) will be the last to be terminated.

The Board of Commissioners will decide between the following options for termination of HAP Contracts:

1. Random lottery
2. Last on, first off
3. First on, first off
4. Families before elderly or disabled

If the HRA must terminate HAP Contracts due to insufficient funding, the HRA will reinstate the termination of HAP Contracts as soon as fiscally and practically feasible in order of termination.



## **PART II: APPROACH TO TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE**

### **12-II.A. OVERVIEW**

The HRA is required by regulation to terminate a family's assistance for certain actions or inactions of the family. For other types of actions or inactions of the family, the regulations give the HRA the authority to either terminate the family's assistance or to take another action. This part discusses the various actions the HRA may choose to take when it has discretion, and outlines the criteria the HRA will use to make its decision about whether or not to terminate assistance. It also specifies the requirements for the notification to the family of the HRA's intent to terminate assistance.

### **12-II.B. METHOD OF TERMINATION [24 CFR 982.552(a)(3)]**

Termination of assistance for a participant may include any or all of the following:

- Terminating housing assistance payments under a current HAP contract,
- Refusing to enter into a new HAP contract or approve a lease, or
- Refusing to process a request for or to provide assistance under portability procedures.

### **12-II.C. ALTERNATIVES TO TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE**

#### **Change in Household Composition**

As a condition of continued assistance, the HRA may require that any household member who participated in or was responsible for an offense no longer resides in the unit [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)(ii)].

##### HRA Policy

As a condition of continued assistance, the head of household must certify that the culpable family 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 family member's current address upon HRA request.

#### **Repayment of Family Debts**

##### HRA Policy

If a family owes amounts to the HRA, as a condition of continued assistance, the HRA will require the family to repay the full amount or to enter into a repayment agreement, within 30 days of receiving notice from the HRA of the amount owed. See Chapter 16 for policies on repayment agreements.

## **12-II.D. CRITERIA FOR DECIDING TO TERMINATE ASSISTANCE**

### **Evidence**

For criminal activity, HUD permits the HRA to terminate assistance if a *preponderance of the evidence* indicates that a household member has engaged in the activity, regardless of whether the household member has been arrested or convicted [24 CFR 982.553(c)].

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will use the concept of 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

### **Use of Criminal Conviction Records after Admission [24 CFR 5.903]**

The regulation at 24 CFR 5.903 governs a HRA's access to and use of criminal conviction records obtained from a "law enforcement agency" such as the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), police departments, and other law enforcement agencies that hold criminal conviction records. While the regulatory listing of permitted uses for these records includes HRA screening of applicants for admission to the HCV program, it specifically excludes the use of records for lease enforcement and eviction of HCV participants and excludes by omission a HRA's use of records to terminate assistance for participants. While a HRA has regulatory authority to use criminal conviction records for the purpose of applicant screening for admission, there is no corresponding authority to use these records to check for criminal and illegal drug activity by participants, and therefore, HRAs may not use records for this purpose. The limitations, however, do not apply to criminal conviction information searches from non-federal sources (i.e., sources other than the "law enforcement agencies" defined in 24 CFR 5.902(b)). There is no prohibition that bars a HRA from using non-federal sources to conduct criminal background checks of program participants.

### **Consideration of Circumstances [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)(i)]**

The HRA is permitted, but not required, to consider all relevant circumstances when determining whether a family's assistance should be terminated.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will consider the following facts and circumstances when making its decision to terminate assistance:

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

The effects that termination of assistance 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 12-II.E) 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 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 HRA may obtain the police report associated with the arrest and consider the reported circumstances of the arrest. The HRA 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 an 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 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 HRA will require the participant to submit evidence of the household member's current participation in or successful completion of a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program, or evidence of otherwise having been rehabilitated successfully.

In the case of program abuse, the dollar amount of the overpaid assistance and whether or not a false certification was signed by the family

### **Reasonable Accommodation [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)(iv)]**

If the family includes a person with disabilities, the HRA's decision to terminate the family's assistance is subject to consideration of reasonable accommodation in accordance with 24 CFR Part 8.

#### HRA Policy

If a family indicates that the behavior of a family member with a disability is the reason for a proposed termination of assistance, the HRA will determine whether the behavior is related to the disability. If so, upon the family's request, the HRA will determine whether alternative measures are appropriate as a reasonable accommodation. The HRA will only consider accommodations that can reasonably be expected to address the behavior that is the basis of the proposed termination of assistance. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of reasonable accommodation.

## **12-II.E. TERMINATIONS RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT OR STALKING**

This section describes the protections against termination of assistance that the Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) provides for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. For general VAWA requirements, key VAWA definitions, and HRA policies pertaining to notification, documentation, and confidentiality, see section 16-IX of this plan.

### **VAWA Protections against Termination**

VAWA provides four specific protections against termination of HCV assistance for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. (*Note:* The second, third, and fourth protections also apply to terminations of tenancy or occupancy by owners participating in the HCV program, as do the limitations discussed under the next heading.)

First, VAWA provides that a HRA may not terminate assistance to a family that moves out of an assisted unit in violation of the lease, with or without prior notification to the HRA, if the move occurred to protect the health or safety of a family member who is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking and who reasonably believed he or she was imminently threatened by harm from further violence if he or she remained in the unit [24 CFR 982.354(b)(4)].

Second, it provides that an incident or incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking may not be construed either as a serious or repeated lease violation by the victim or as good cause to terminate the assistance of the victim [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)].

Third, it provides that criminal activity directly related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking may not be construed as cause for terminating the assistance of a tenant if a member of the tenant's household, a guest, or another person under the tenant's control is the one engaging in the criminal activity and the tenant or affiliated individual or other individual is the actual or threatened victim of the domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(2)].

Fourth, it gives HRAs the authority to terminate assistance to any tenant or lawful occupant who engages in criminal acts of physical violence against family members or others without terminating assistance to, or otherwise penalizing, the victim of the violence [24 CFR 5.2009(a)].

### **Limitations on VAWA Protections [24 CFR 5.2005(d) and (e)]**

VAWA does not limit the authority of a HRA to terminate the assistance of a victim of abuse for reasons unrelated to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking so long as the HRA does not subject the victim to a more demanding standard than it applies to other program participants [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(1)].

Likewise, VAWA does not limit the authority of a HRA to terminate the assistance of a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking if the HRA can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing service to the assisted property if the victim is not terminated from assistance [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(2)].

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 and imminent threat, the HRA must have objective evidence of words, gestures, actions, or other indicators. Even when a victim poses an actual and imminent threat, however, HUD regulations authorize a HRA to terminate the victim's assistance "only when there are no other actions that could be taken to reduce or eliminate the threat" [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(3)].

#### HRA Policy

In determining whether a program participant who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking is an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing service to a property, the HRA will consider the following, and any other relevant, factors:

Whether the threat is toward an employee 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 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 or seeking a legal remedy to prevent the perpetrator from acting on the threat

If the participant wishes to contest the HRA's determination that he or she is an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or employees, the participant may do so as part of the informal hearing.



## **Documentation of Abuse [24 CFR 5.2007]**

### HRA Policy

When an individual facing termination of assistance for reasons related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking claims protection under VAWA, the HRA will request that the individual provide documentation supporting the claim in accordance with the policies in section 16-IX.D of this plan.

The HRA 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 HRA will document the waiver in the individual's file.

### **Terminating the Assistance of a Domestic Violence Perpetrator**

Although VAWA provides protection against termination of assistance for victims of domestic violence, it does not provide such protection for perpetrators. VAWA gives the HRA the explicit authority to “terminate assistance to any individual who is a tenant or lawful occupant and who engages in criminal acts of physical violence against family members or others” without terminating assistance to “or otherwise penalizing the victim of such violence who is also a tenant or lawful occupant” [24 CFR 5.2009(a)]. This authority is not dependent on a bifurcated lease or other eviction action by an owner against an individual family member. Further, this authority supersedes any local, state, or other federal law to the contrary. However, if the HRA chooses to exercise this authority, it must follow any procedures prescribed by HUD or by applicable local, state, or federal law regarding termination of assistance. This means that the HRA must follow the same rules when terminating assistance to an individual as it would when terminating the assistance of an entire family [3/16/07 *Federal Register* notice on the applicability of VAWA to HUD programs].

If the perpetrator remains in the unit, the HRA continues to pay the owner until the HRA terminates the perpetrator from the program. The HRA must not stop paying HAP until 30 days after the owner bifurcates the lease to evict the perpetrator. The HRA may pay HAP for the full month if the 30-day period will end mid-month [Notice PIH 2017-08].

If the perpetrator is the only participant eligible to receive assistance, the HRA will provide any remaining participant a chance to establish eligibility for the program. If the remaining participant cannot do so, the HRA will provide them with 30 days to establish eligibility for another housing program prior to termination of the HAP contract.

### HRA Policy

The HRA will terminate assistance to a family member if the HRA determines that the family member has committed criminal acts of physical violence against other family members or others. This action will not affect the assistance of the remaining, nonculpable family members.

In making its decision, the HRA will consider all credible evidence, including, but not limited to, a signed certification (form HUD-5382) or other documentation of abuse submitted to the HRA by the victim in accordance with this section and section 16-IX.D. The HRA will also consider the factors in section 12-II.D. Upon such consideration, the HRA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the assistance of the culpable family member.

If the HRA does terminate the assistance of the culpable family member, it will do so in accordance with applicable law, HUD regulations, and the policies in this plan.

## **12-II.F. TERMINATION NOTICE**

HUD regulations require HRAs to provide written notice of termination of assistance to a family only when the family is entitled to an informal hearing. However, since the family's HAP contract and lease will also terminate when the family's assistance terminates [form HUD-52641], it is a good business practice to provide written notification to both owner and family anytime assistance will be terminated, whether voluntarily or involuntarily.

### HRA Policy

Whenever a family's assistance will be terminated, the HRA will send a written notice of termination to the family and to the owner. The HRA will also send a form HUD-5382 and form HUD-5380 to the family with the termination notice. The notice will state the date on which the termination will become effective. This date generally will be at least 30 calendar days following the date of the termination notice, but exceptions will be made whenever HUD rules, other HRA policies, or the circumstances surrounding the termination require.

When the HRA notifies an owner that a family's assistance will be terminated, the HRA will, if appropriate, advise the owner of his/her right to offer the family a separate, unassisted lease.

If a family whose assistance is being terminated is entitled to an informal hearing, the notice of termination that the HRA sends to the family must meet the additional HUD and HRA notice requirements discussed in section 16-III.C of this plan. VAWA 2013 expands notification requirements to require HRAs to provide notice of VAWA rights and the HUD 5382 form when a HRA terminates a household's housing benefits.

### HRA Policy

Whenever the HRA decides to terminate a family's assistance because of the family's action or failure to act, the HRA will include in its termination notice the VAWA information described in section 16-IX.C of this plan and a form HUD-5382 and form HUD-5380. The HRA will request in writing that a family member wishing to claim protection under VAWA notify the HRA within 10 business days.

Still other notice requirements apply in two situations:

- If a criminal record is the basis of a family's termination, the HRA must provide a copy of the record to the subject of the record and the tenant so that they have an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the record [24 CFR 982.553(d)(2)].
- If immigration status is the basis of a family's termination, as discussed in section 12-I.D, the special notice requirements in section 16-III.D must be followed.

## **PART III: TERMINATION OF TENANCY BY THE OWNER**

### **12-III.A. OVERVIEW**

Termination of an assisted tenancy is a matter between the owner and the family; the HRA is not directly involved. However, the owner is under some constraints when terminating an assisted tenancy. Termination of tenancy for certain reasons will also result in termination of assistance as discussed in this section.

### **12-III.B. GROUNDS FOR OWNER TERMINATION OF TENANCY [24 CFR 982.310, 24 CFR 5.2005(c), and Form HUD-52641-A, Tenancy Addendum]**

During the term of the lease, the owner is not permitted to terminate the tenancy except for serious or repeated violations of the lease, certain violations of state or local law, or other good cause.

#### **Serious or Repeated Lease Violations**

The owner is permitted to terminate the family's tenancy for serious or repeated violations of the terms and conditions of the lease, except when the violations are related to incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking and the victim is protected from eviction by the Violence against Women Act of 2013 (see section 12-II.E). A serious lease violation includes failure to pay rent or other amounts due under the lease. However, the HRA's failure to make a HAP payment to the owner is not a violation of the lease between the family and the owner.

#### **Violation of Federal, State, or Local Law**

The owner is permitted to terminate the tenancy if a family member violates federal, state, or local law that imposes obligations in connection with the occupancy or use of the premises.

#### **Criminal Activity or Alcohol Abuse**

The owner may terminate tenancy during the term of the lease if any *covered person*—meaning any member of the household, a guest, or another person under the tenant's control—commits any of the following types of criminal activity (for applicable definitions see 24 CFR 5.100):

- Any criminal activity that threatens the health or safety of, or the right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by, other residents (including property management staff residing on the premises)
- Any criminal activity that threatens the health or safety of, or the right to peaceful enjoyment of their residences by, persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises
- Any violent criminal activity on or near the premises
- Any drug-related criminal activity on or near the premises

However, in the case of criminal activity directly related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, if the tenant or an affiliated individual is the victim, the criminal activity may not be construed as cause for terminating the victim's tenancy (see section 12-II.E).

The owner may terminate tenancy during the term of the lease if any member of the household is:

- Fleeing to avoid prosecution, custody, or confinement after conviction for a crime or an 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.

The owner may terminate tenancy during the term of the lease if any member of the household has engaged in abuse of alcohol that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

### ***Evidence of Criminal Activity***

The owner may terminate tenancy and evict by judicial action a family for criminal activity by a covered person if the owner determines the covered person has engaged in the criminal activity, regardless of whether the covered person has been arrested or convicted for such activity and without satisfying the standard of proof used for a criminal conviction. This is the case except in certain incidents where the criminal activity directly relates to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and the tenant or an affiliated individual is the victim or threatened victim of the domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

### **Other Good Cause**

During the initial lease term, the owner may not terminate the tenancy for “other good cause” unless the owner is terminating the tenancy because of something the family did or failed to do. During the initial lease term or during any extension term, other good cause includes the disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property, or living or housekeeping habits that cause damage to the unit or premises.

After the initial lease term, “other good cause” for termination of tenancy by the owner includes:

- Failure by the family to accept the offer of a new lease or revision
- The owner’s desire to use the unit for personal or family use, or for a purpose other than as a residential rental unit
- A business or economic reason for termination of the tenancy (such as sale of the property, renovation of the unit, or desire to lease the unit at a higher rent)

After the initial lease term, the owner may give the family notice at any time, in accordance with the terms of the lease.

If a property is subject to foreclosure, during the term of the lease, the new owner of the property does not have good cause to terminate the tenant’s lease, unless the new owner will occupy the unit as their primary residence and has provided the tenant with at least a 90-day notice. In that case, the lease may be terminated effective on the date of sale, although the tenant is still entitled to a 90-day notice to vacate. See Section 13-II.G for a discussion of HRA policies relating to units in foreclosure.

### **12-III.C. EVICTION [24 CFR 982.310(e) and (f) and Form HUD-52641-A, Tenancy Addendum]**

The owner must give the tenant a written notice that specifies the grounds for termination of tenancy during the term of the lease. The tenancy does not terminate before the owner has given this notice, and the notice must be given at or before commencement of the eviction action.

The notice of grounds may be included in, or may be combined with, any owner eviction notice to the tenant.

Owner eviction notice means a notice to vacate, or a complaint or other initial pleading used under state or local law to commence an eviction action. The owner may only evict the tenant from the unit by instituting a court action. The owner must give the HRA a copy of any eviction notice at the same time the owner notifies the family. The family is also required to give the HRA a copy of any eviction notice (see Chapter 5).

#### **HRA Policy**

If the eviction action is finalized in court, the owner must provide the HRA with documentation related to the eviction, including notice of the eviction date, as soon as possible, but no later than 5 business days following the court-ordered eviction.

#### **12-III.D. DECIDING WHETHER TO TERMINATE TENANCY [24 CFR 982.310(h), 24 CFR 982.310(h)(4)]**

An owner who has grounds to terminate a tenancy is not required to do so, and may consider all of the circumstances relevant to a particular case before making a decision. These might include:

- The nature of the offending action
- The seriousness of the offending action;
- The effect on the community of the termination, or of the owner's failure to terminate the tenancy;
- The extent of participation by the leaseholder in the offending action;
- The effect of termination of tenancy on household members not involved in the offending activity;
- The demand for assisted housing by families who will adhere to lease responsibilities;
- The extent to which the leaseholder has shown personal responsibility and taken all reasonable steps to prevent or mitigate the offending action;
- The effect of the owner's action on the integrity of the program.

The owner may require a family 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.

In determining whether to terminate tenancy for illegal use of drugs or alcohol abuse by a household member who is no longer engaged in such behavior, the owner may consider whether such household member is participating in or has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program, or has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully (42 U.S.C. 13661). For this purpose, the owner may require the tenant to submit evidence of the household member's current participation in, or successful completion of, a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program or evidence of otherwise having been rehabilitated successfully.

The owner's termination of tenancy actions must be consistent with the fair housing and equal opportunity provisions in 24 CFR 5.105.

An owner's decision to terminate tenancy for incidents related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking is limited by the Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) and the conforming regulations in 24 CFR Part 5, Subpart L. (See section 12-II.E.)

#### **12-III.E. EFFECT OF TENANCY TERMINATION ON THE FAMILY'S ASSISTANCE**

If a termination is not due to a serious or repeated violation of the lease, and if the HRA has no other grounds for termination of assistance, the HRA may issue a new voucher so that the family can move with continued assistance (see Chapter 10).

## EXHIBIT 12-1: STATEMENT OF FAMILY OBLIGATIONS

Following is a listing of a participant family's obligations under the HCV program:

- The family must supply any information that the HRA or HUD determines to be necessary, including submission of required evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status.
- The family must provide true and complete information at every reexamination including all income and household changes.
- The family must cooperate in completing their annual reexamination, as described in Chapter 11 of the HRA's Administrative Plan.

### HRA Policy

Families that fail to attend two scheduled interviews without HRA approval or do not cooperate with completing their annual reexamination by mail will be sent a notice of termination in accordance with Chapter 12 of the HRA's Administrative Plan.

- The family must supply any information requested by the HRA or HUD for use in a regularly scheduled reexamination or interim reexamination of family income and composition.
- The family must disclose and verify social security numbers and sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information.
- Any information supplied by the family must be true and complete.
- The family is responsible for any Housing Quality Standards (HQS) breach by the family caused by failure to pay tenant-provided utilities or appliances, or damages to the dwelling unit or premises beyond normal wear and tear caused by any member of the household or guest.

### HRA Policy

Damages beyond normal wear and tear will be considered to be damages which could be assessed against the security deposit.

- The family must allow the HRA to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice, as described in Chapter 8 of the HRA's Administrative Plan.

### HRA Policy

If the family misses two scheduled inspections without HRA approval, it may result in termination of the family's assistance in accordance with Chapter 12 of the HRA's Administrative Plan.

- The family must not commit any serious or repeated violation of the lease.

### HRA Policy

The HRA will determine if a family has committed serious or repeated violations of the lease based on available evidence, including but not limited to, a court-ordered eviction or an owner's notice to evict, police reports, and affidavits from the owner, neighbors, or other credible parties with direct knowledge.



*Serious and repeated lease violations* will include, but not be limited to, nonpayment of rent, disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property, living or housekeeping habits that cause damage to the unit or premises, and criminal activity, including actions committed by guests. Generally, the criterion to be used will be whether or not the reason for the eviction was the fault of the tenant or guests. Any incidents of, or criminal activity related to, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking will not be construed as serious or repeated lease violations by the victim [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)].

- The family must notify the HRA and the owner before moving out of the unit or terminating the lease.

#### HRA Policy

The family can make only one elective move during any 12-month period.

The family must comply with lease requirements regarding written notice to the owner. The family must provide at least 30 days written notice to the HRA.

The family will be required to resolve any charges against the security deposit upon move-out.

- The family must give the HRA a copy of any owner eviction notice within 10 days of receipt of that notice.
- The family must use the assisted unit for residence by the family. The unit must be the family's only residence.
- The composition of the assisted family residing in the unit must be approved by the HRA. The family must notify the HRA in writing within 10 business days of the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child. The family must request HRA approval to add any other family member as an occupant of the unit.

#### HRA Policy

The request to add a family member must be submitted in writing and approved prior to the person moving into the unit. The HRA will determine eligibility of the new member in accordance with the policies in Chapter 3 of the HRA Administrative Plan. This includes any person not on the lease who is expected to stay in the unit for more than 10 consecutive days or 30 cumulative days within a 12-month period and therefore no longer qualifies as a "guest."

Anyone who receives mail at the assisted unit must be approved by the HRA and included in the composition of the assisted family.

- The family must notify the HRA in writing within 10 business days if any family member no longer lives in the unit.
- If the HRA has given approval, a foster child or a live-in aide may reside in the unit. The HRA has the discretion to adopt reasonable policies concerning residency by a foster child or a live-in aide, and to define when HRA consent may be given or denied. For policies related to the request and approval/disapproval of foster children, foster adults, and live-in aides, see Chapter 3 (Sections I.K and I.M), and Chapter 11 (Section II.B) of the HRA's Administrative Plan.

- The family is permitted to obtain an interim reexamination any time the family has experienced a change in circumstances since the last determination [24 CFR 982.516(b)(2)].

#### HRA Policy

The family must report in writing if their household income increases \$200 or more per month within 10 business days of the change occurring.

- The family must not sublease the unit, assign the lease, or transfer the unit.

#### HRA Policy

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.

- The family must supply any information requested by the HRA to verify that the family is living in the unit or information related to family absence from the unit.
- The family must promptly notify the HRA when the family is absent from the unit.

#### HRA Policy

Notice is required under this provision when any family members will be absent from the unit for an extended period. An extended period is defined as any period greater than 30 calendar days. Written notice must be provided to the HRA at least 10 business days prior to the start of the extended absence.

- The family must pay utility bills and provide and maintain any appliances that the owner is not required to provide under the lease [Form HUD-52646, Voucher].
- The family must not own or have any interest in the unit, (other than in a cooperative and owners of a manufactured home leasing a manufactured home space).
- Family members must not commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the program. (See Chapter 14, Program Integrity of the HRA's Administrative Plan for additional information).
- The family agrees to allow previous and/or current owners to share information about tenancy with the HRA.
- Family members must not engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. See Chapter 12 for HUD and HRA policies of the HRA's Administrative Plan related to drug-related and violent criminal activity.
- Members of the household must not engage in abuse of alcohol in a way that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. See Chapter 12 of the HRA's Administrative Plan for a discussion of HUD and HRA policies related to alcohol abuse.

- An assisted family or member of the family must not receive HCV program assistance while receiving another housing subsidy, for the same unit or a different unit under any other federal, state or local housing assistance program.
- A family must not receive HCV program assistance while residing in a unit owned by a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother of any member of the family, unless the HRA has determined (and has notified the owner and the family of such determination) that approving rental of the unit, notwithstanding such relationship, would provide reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with disabilities. [Form HUD-52646, Voucher]

## Chapter 13

### OWNERS

#### INTRODUCTION

Owners play a major role in the HCV program by supplying decent, safe, and sanitary housing for participating families.

The term “owner” refers to any person or entity with the legal right to lease or sublease a unit to a participant in the HCV program [24 CFR 982.4(b)]. The term “owner” includes a principal or other interested party [24 CFR 982.453; 24 CFR 982.306(f)], such as a designated agent of the owner.

Owners have numerous responsibilities under the program, including screening and leasing to families, maintaining the dwelling unit, enforcing the lease, and complying with various contractual obligations.

The chapter is organized in two parts:

Part I: Owners in the HCV Program. This part discusses the role of an owner in the HRA’s HCV program and highlights key owner rights and responsibilities.

Part II: HAP Contracts. This part explains provisions of the HAP contract and the relationship between the HRA and the owner as expressed in the HAP contract.

For detailed information about HCV program responsibilities and processes, including HRA policies in key areas, owners will need to refer to several other chapters in this plan. Where appropriate, Chapter 13 will reference the other chapters.



## **PART I. OWNERS IN THE HCV PROGRAM**

### **13-I.A. OWNER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION [HCV GB, pp. 2-4 to 2-6; HCV Landlord Strategy Guidebook for HRAs]**

#### **Recruitment**

HRAs are responsible for ensuring that very low-income families have access to all types and ranges of affordable housing in the HRA's jurisdiction, particularly housing outside areas of poverty or minority concentration. A critical element in fulfilling this responsibility is for the HRA to ensure that a sufficient number of owners, representing all types and ranges of affordable housing in the HRA's jurisdiction, are willing to participate in the HCV program.

To accomplish this objective, HRAs must identify and recruit new owners to participate in the program.

If the HRA will be conducting outreach events, the HRA must ensure that notices and communications during outreach events are provided in a manner that is effective for persons with hearing, visual, and other communications-related disabilities. HRAs must also take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to programs to persons with limited English proficiency.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will conduct owner outreach to ensure that owners are familiar with the program and its advantages. The HRA will actively recruit property owners with property located outside areas of poverty and minority concentration. These outreach strategies will include:

- Distributing printed material about the program to property owners and managers

- Contacting property owners and managers by phone or in-person

- Holding owner recruitment/information meetings at least once a year

- Participating in community-based organizations comprised of private property and apartment owners and managers

- Developing working relationships with owners, apartment associations, industry investor groups, and real estate brokers associations

- To the extent practical, partnering with and attending events hosted by other area agencies to deliver information about the HCV program

Outreach strategies will be monitored for effectiveness and adapted accordingly.

The following areas have been identified as areas of poverty and minority concentration within the HRA's jurisdiction (source: Minnesota Department of Health, [data.web.state.mn.us/poverty/basic](http://data.web.state.mn.us/poverty/basic))

Benton County, Census tracts 27009020205, 27009020206, 27009021101, 27009021102, 27009021200

Sherburne County, Census tract 27141030503, 27141031500

Stearns County, Census tracts 27145000302, 27145000401, 27145000500, 27145000601,  
27145000801, 27145011301, 27145011600, 27145011400, 27145000301, 27145000602,  
27145001001, 27145000701, 27145000901

Wright County, Census tract 27171100400

## **Retention**

In addition to recruiting owners to participate in the HCV program, the HRA must also provide the kind of customer service that will encourage participating owners to remain active in the program.

### HRA Policy

All HRA activities that may affect an owner's ability to lease a unit will be processed as rapidly as possible, in order to minimize vacancy losses for owners.

The HRA will provide owners with a handbook that explains the program, including HUD and HRA policies and procedures, in easy-to-understand language.

The HRA will give special attention to helping new owners succeed through activities such as:

- Providing the owner with a designated HRA contact person.

- Coordinating inspection and leasing activities between the HRA, the owner, and the family.

- Initiating telephone contact with the owner to explain the inspection process and providing an inspection booklet and other resource materials about HUD housing quality standards.

- Providing other written information about how the program operates through a landlord handbook, including answers to frequently asked questions.

- Contacting owners via emails or texts to disseminate information.

Additional services may be undertaken on an as-needed basis, and as resources permit.



### **13-I.B. BASIC HCV PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

HUD requires the HRA to assist families in their housing search by providing the family with a list of landlords or other parties known to the HRA who may be willing to lease a unit to the family, or to help the family find a unit. Although the HRA cannot maintain a list of owners that are pre-qualified to participate in the program, owners may indicate to the HRA their willingness to lease a unit to an eligible HCV family, or to help the HCV family find a unit [24 CFR 982.301(b)(11)].

#### HRA Policy

Owners that wish to indicate their willingness to lease a unit to an eligible HCV family or to help the HCV family find a unit must notify the HRA. The HRA will maintain a listing of such owners and provide this listing to HCV families as requested.

When a family approaches an owner to apply for tenancy, the owner is responsible for screening the family and deciding whether to lease to the family, just as the owner would with any potential unassisted tenant. The HRA has no liability or responsibility to the owner or other persons for the family's behavior or suitability for tenancy. See chapters 3 and 9 for more detail on tenant family screening policies and process.

If the owner is willing, the family and the owner must jointly complete a Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA, Form HUD 52517), which constitutes the family's request for assistance in the specified unit, and which documents the owner's willingness to lease to the family and to follow the program's requirements. When submitted to the HRA, this document is the first step in the process of obtaining approval for the family to receive the financial assistance it will need in order to occupy the unit. Also submitted with the RTA is a copy of the owner's proposed dwelling lease, including the HUD-required Tenancy Addendum (Form HUD-52641-A). See Chapter 9 for more detail on request for tenancy approval policies and process.

HUD regulations stipulate requirements for the approval of an assisted tenancy.

The owner must be qualified to participate in the program [24 CFR 982.306]. Some owners are precluded from participating in the program, or from renting to a particular family, either because of their past history with this or another federal housing program, or because of certain conflicts of interest. Owner qualifications are discussed later in this chapter.

The selected unit must be of a type that is eligible for the program [24 CFR 982.305(a)]. Certain types of dwelling units cannot be assisted under the HCV program. Other types may be assisted under certain conditions. See chapter 9 for more detail on unit eligibility policies and process.

The selected unit must meet HUD's Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and/or equivalent state or local standards approved by HUD [24 CFR 982.305(a)]. The HRA will inspect the owner's dwelling unit at least annually to ensure that the unit continues to meet HQS requirements. See chapter 8 for a discussion of the HQS standards and policies for HQS inspections at initial lease-up and throughout the family's tenancy.

The HRA must determine that the proposed rent for the unit is reasonable [24 CFR 982.305(a)]. The rent must be reasonable in relation to comparable unassisted units in the area and must not be in excess of rents charged by the owner for comparable, unassisted units on the premises. See chapter 8 for a discussion of requirements and policies on rent reasonableness, rent comparability and the rent reasonableness determination process.

At initial lease-up of a unit, if the gross rent exceeds the applicable payment standard, the HRA must ensure that the family share does not exceed 40 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income [24 CFR 982.305(a)]. See chapter 6 for a discussion of the calculation of family income, family share of rent and HAP.

The dwelling lease must comply with all program requirements [24 CFR 982.308]. Owners are encouraged to use their standard leases when renting to an assisted family. The HUD Tenancy Addendum includes the HUD requirements governing the tenancy and must be added word-for-word to the owner's lease. See chapter 9 for a discussion of the dwelling lease and tenancy addendum, including lease terms and provisions.

The HRA and the owner must execute a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract (Form HUD-52641). The HAP contract format is prescribed by HUD. See chapter 9 for a discussion of the HUD requirements for execution of the HAP contract.

### **13-I.C. OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES [24 CFR 982.452]**

The basic owner responsibilities in the HCV program are outlined in the regulations as follows:

- Complying with all of the owner's obligations under the housing assistance payments (HAP) contract and the lease
- Performing all management and rental functions for the assisted unit, including selecting a voucher-holder to lease the unit, and deciding if the family is suitable for tenancy of the unit
- Maintaining the unit in accordance with the Housing Quality Standards (HQS), including performance of ordinary and extraordinary maintenance
- Complying with equal opportunity requirements
- Preparing and furnishing to the HRA information required under the HAP contract
- Collecting the security deposit, the tenant rent, and any charges for unit damage by the family.
- Enforcing tenant obligations under the dwelling lease
- Paying for utilities and services that are not the responsibility of the family as specified in the lease
- Allowing reasonable modifications to a dwelling unit occupied or to be occupied by a disabled person [24 CFR 100.203]
- Complying with the Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA) when screening prospective HCV tenants or terminating the tenancy of an HCV family (see 24 CFR Part 5, Subpart L; 24 CFR 982.310(h)(4); and 24 CFR 982.452(b)(1))

### **13-I.D. OWNER QUALIFICATIONS**

The HRA does not formally approve an owner to participate in the HCV program. However, there are a number of criteria where the HRA may deny approval of an assisted tenancy based on past owner behavior, conflict of interest, or other owner-related issues. No owner has a right to participate in the HCV program [24 CFR 982.306(e)].

#### **Owners Barred from Participation [24 CFR 982.306(a) and (b)]**

The HRA must not approve the assisted tenancy if the HRA has been informed that the owner has been debarred, suspended, or subject to a limited denial of participation under 24 CFR part 24. HUD may direct the HRA not to approve a tenancy request if a court or administrative agency has determined that the owner violated the Fair Housing Act or other federal equal opportunity requirements, or if such an action is pending.

#### **Leasing to Relatives [24 CFR 982.306(d), HCV GB p. 11-2]**

The HRA must not approve a tenancy if the owner is the parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of the family. The HRA may make an exception as a reasonable accommodation for a family member with a disability. The owner is required to certify that no such relationship exists. This restriction applies at the time that the family receives assistance under the HCV program for occupancy of a particular unit. Current contracts on behalf of owners and families that are related may continue, but any new leases or contracts for these families may not be approved.

#### **Conflict of Interest [24 CFR 982.161; HCV GB p. 8-19]**

The HRA must not approve a tenancy in which any of the following classes of persons has any interest, direct or indirect, during tenure or for one year thereafter:

- Any present or former member or officer of the HRA (except a participant commissioner)
- Any employee of the HRA, or any contractor, subcontractor or agent of the HRA, who formulates policy or who influences decisions with respect to the programs
- Any public official, member of a governing body, or State or local legislator, who exercises functions or responsibilities with respect to the programs
- Any member of the Congress of the United States

HUD may waive the conflict of interest requirements, except for members of Congress, for good cause. The HRA must submit a waiver request to the appropriate HUD Field Office for determination.

Any waiver request submitted by the HRA must include the following [HCV Guidebook pp.11-2 and 11-3]:

- Complete statement of the facts of the case;
- Analysis of the specific conflict of interest provision of the HAP contract and justification as to why the provision should be waived;
- Analysis of and statement of consistency with state and local laws. The local HUD office, the HRA, or both parties may conduct this analysis. Where appropriate, an opinion by the state's attorney general should be obtained;
- Opinion by the local HUD office as to whether there would be an appearance of impropriety if the waiver were granted;
- Statement regarding alternative existing housing available for lease under the HCV program or other assisted housing if the waiver is denied;
- If the case involves a hardship for a particular family, statement of the circumstances and discussion of possible alternatives;
- If the case involves a public official or member of the governing body, explanation of his/her duties under state or local law, including reference to any responsibilities involving the HCV program;
- If the case involves employment of a family member by the HRA or assistance under the HCV program for an eligible HRA employee, explanation of the responsibilities and duties of the position, including any related to the HCV program;
- If the case involves an investment on the part of a member, officer, or employee of the HRA, description of the nature of the investment, including disclosure/divestiture plans.

Where the HRA has requested a conflict of interest waiver, the HRA may not execute the HAP contract until HUD has made a decision on the waiver request.

#### HRA Policy

In considering whether to request a conflict of interest waiver from HUD, the HRA will consider certain factors such as consistency of the waiver with state and local laws, the existence of alternative housing available to families, the individual circumstances of a particular family, the specific duties of individuals whose positions present a possible conflict of interest, the nature of any financial investment in the property and plans for disclosure/divestiture, and the possible appearance of impropriety.

## **Owner Actions That May Result in Disapproval of a Tenancy Request [24 CFR 982.306(c)]**

HUD regulations permit the HRA to disapprove a request for tenancy for various actions and inactions of the owner.

If the HRA disapproves a request for tenancy because an owner is not qualified, it may not terminate the HAP contract for any assisted families that are already living in the owner's properties unless the owner has violated the HAP contract for those units [HCV GB p. 11-4].

### HRA Policy

The HRA will refuse to approve a request for tenancy if the HRA becomes aware that any of the following are true:

- The owner has violated obligations under a HAP contract under Section 8 of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437f);

- The owner has committed fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program;

- The owner has engaged in any drug-related criminal activity or any violent criminal activity;

- The owner has a history or practice of non-compliance with the HQS for units leased under the tenant-based programs, or with applicable housing standards for units leased with project-based Section 8 assistance or leased under any other federal housing program;

- The owner has a history or practice of failing to terminate tenancy of tenants of units assisted under Section 8 or any other federally assisted housing program for activity engaged in by the tenant, any member of the household, a guest or another person under the control of any member of the household that: (i) Threatens the right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents; (ii) Threatens the health or safety of other residents, of employees of the HRA, or of owner employees or other persons engaged in management of the housing; (iii) Threatens the health or safety of, or the right to peaceful enjoyment of their residences, by persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises; or (iv) Is drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity;

- The owner has a history or practice of renting units that fail to meet state or local housing codes; or

- The owner has not paid state or local real estate taxes, fines, or assessment.

In considering whether to disapprove owners for any of the discretionary reasons listed above, the HRA will consider any mitigating factors. Such factors may include, but are not limited to, the seriousness of the violation in relation to program requirements, the impact on the ability of families to lease units under the program, health and safety of participating families, among others. Upon consideration of such circumstances, the HRA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose to approve an owner.

## **Legal Ownership of Unit**

The following represents HRA policy on legal ownership of a dwelling unit to be assisted under the HCV program.

### HRA Policy

The HRA will only enter into a contractual relationship with the legal owner of a qualified unit. No tenancy will be approved without acceptable documentation of legal ownership (e.g., property deed, proof of taxes for most recent year).

## **13-I.E. NON-DISCRIMINATION [HAP Contract – Form HUD-52641]**

The owner must not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, familial status, or disability, in connection with any actions or responsibilities under the HCV program and the HAP contract with the HRA.

The owner must cooperate with the HRA and with HUD in conducting any equal opportunity compliance reviews and complaint investigations in connection with the HCV program and the HAP contract with the HRA.

See Chapter 2 for a more thorough discussion of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity requirements in the HCV program.





## **PART II. HAP CONTRACTS**

### **13-II.A. OVERVIEW**

The HAP contract represents a written agreement between the HRA and the owner of the dwelling unit occupied by an HCV assisted family. The contract spells out the owner's responsibilities under the program, as well as the HRA's obligations. Under the HAP contract, the HRA agrees to make housing assistance payments to the owner on behalf of the family approved by the HRA to occupy the unit.

The HAP contract is used for all HCV program tenancies except for assistance under the Section 8 homeownership program, and assistance to families that own a manufactured home and use their assistance to lease the space for the manufactured home. See chapter 15 for a discussion of any special housing types included in the HRA's HCV program.

When the HRA has determined that the unit meets program requirements and the tenancy is approvable, the HRA and owner must execute the HAP contract. See chapter 9 for a discussion of the leasing process, including provisions for execution of the HAP contract.

### **13-II.B. HAP CONTRACT CONTENTS**

The HAP contract format is required by HUD, specifically Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract, Form HUD-52641.

The HAP contract contains three parts.

Part A of the contract includes basic contract information: the names of the tenant and all household members, the address of the contract unit, start and end dates of initial lease term, the amount of initial monthly rent to owner, the amount of initial housing assistance payment, the utilities and appliances to be supplied by owner and tenant, and the signatures of the HRA representative and owner [HCV Guidebook, pp. 11-10 and 11-11].

In general, the HAP contract cannot be modified. However, HRAs do have the discretion to add language to Part A of the HAP contract which prohibits the owner from collecting a security deposit in excess of private market practices or in excess of amounts charged to unassisted tenants. HRA policy on the amount of security deposit an owner may collect is found in Chapter 9.

HRAs also have the discretion to add language to Part A of the HAP contract that defines when the housing assistance payment by the HRA is deemed received by the owner (e.g., upon mailing by the HRA or actual receipt by the owner).

#### HRA Policy

The HRA has not adopted a policy that defines when the housing assistance payment by the HRA is deemed received by the owner. Therefore, no modifications to the HAP contract will be necessary.

Part B is the body of the contract. It describes in detail program requirements affecting the owner and owner roles and responsibilities under the HCV program. Most of the requirements contained in Part B of the HAP contract are outlined elsewhere in this plan. Topics addressed in Part B include:

- Lease of Contract Unit
- Maintenance, Utilities, and Other Services
- Term of HAP Contract
- Provision and Payment of Utilities and Appliances
- Rent to Owner: Reasonable Rent
- HRA Payment to Owner
- Prohibition of Discrimination
- Owner's Breach of HAP Contract
- HRA and HUD Access to Premises and Owner's Records
- Exclusion of Third-Party Rights
- Conflict of Interest
- Assignment of the HAP Contract
- Written Notices
- Entire Agreement Interpretation

Part C of the contract includes the Tenancy Addendum (Form HUD-52641-A). The addendum sets forth the tenancy requirements for the program and the composition of the household, as approved by the HRA. The tenant has the right to enforce the Tenancy Addendum against the owner. The terms of the Tenancy Addendum prevail over any other provisions of the lease.

## **13-II.C. HAP CONTRACT PAYMENTS**

### **General**

During the term of the HAP contract, and subject to the provisions of the HAP contract, the HRA must make monthly HAP payments to the owner on behalf of the family, at the beginning of each month. If a lease term begins after the first of the month, the HAP payment for the first month is prorated for a partial month.

The amount of the HAP payment is determined according to the policies described in Chapter 6 and is subject to change during the term of the HAP contract. The HRA must notify the owner and the family in writing of any changes in the HAP payment.

HAP payments can be made only during the lease term, and only while the family is residing in the unit.

The monthly HAP payment by the HRA is credited toward the monthly rent to owner under the family's lease. The total of the rent paid by the tenant and the HAP payment is equal to the rent to owner as specified in the lease.

The family is not responsible for payment of the HAP payment, and the HRA is not responsible for payment of the family share of rent.

The family's share of the rent cannot be more than the difference between the rent to owner and the HAP payment. The owner may not demand or accept any rent payment from the tenant in excess of this maximum [24 CFR 982.451(b)(4)]. The owner may not charge the tenant extra amounts for items customarily included in rent in the locality or provided at no additional cost to unsubsidized tenants in the premises [24 CFR 982.510(c)]. See chapter 9 for a discussion of separate, non-lease agreements for services, appliances and other items that are not included in the lease.

If the owner receives any excess HAP from the HRA, the excess amount must be returned immediately. If the HRA determines that the owner is not entitled to all or a portion of the HAP, the HRA may deduct the amount of overpayment from any amounts due to the owner, including amounts due under any other Section 8 HCV contract. See Chapter 16 for additional detail on owner reimbursement of HAP overpayments.

### **Owner Certification of Compliance**

Unless the owner complies with all provisions of the HAP contract, the owner is not entitled to receive housing assistance payments under the HAP contract [HAP Contract – Form HUD-52641].

By endorsing the monthly check from the HRA, the owner certifies to compliance with the terms of the HAP contract. This includes certification that the owner is maintaining the unit and premises in accordance with HQS; that the contract unit is leased to the tenant family and, to the best of the owner's knowledge, the family resides in the unit as the family's only residence; the rent to owner does not exceed rents charged by the owner for comparable unassisted units on the premises; and that the owner does not receive (other than rent to owner) any additional payments or other consideration for rent of the contract unit during the HAP term.

### **Late HAP Payments [24 CFR 982.451(a)(5)]**

The HRA is responsible for making HAP payments promptly when due to the owner, in accordance with the terms of the HAP contract. After the first two calendar months of the HAP contract term, the HAP contract provides for late penalties if the HRA fails to make the HAP payment on time.

Penalties for late HAP payments can only be imposed if 1) the penalties are in accordance with generally accepted local rental market practices and law governing penalties for late payment by tenants; 2) it is the owner's normal business practice to charge late payment penalties for both assisted and unassisted families; and 3) the owner charges the assisted family for late payment of the family's share of the rent.

The HRA is not required to pay a late payment penalty if HUD determines that the payment is late for reasons beyond the HRA's control. In addition, late payment penalties are not required if the HRA intentionally delays or denies payment as a remedy to an owner breach of the HAP contract [HCV Guidebook p. 11-7].

### **Termination of HAP Payments [24 CFR 982.311(b)]**

The HRA must continue making housing assistance payments to the owner in accordance with the HAP contract as long as the tenant continues to occupy the unit and the HAP contract is not violated.

HAP payments terminate when the HAP contract terminates or when the tenancy is terminated in accordance with the terms of the lease.

If the owner has initiated eviction proceedings against the family and the family continues to reside in the unit, the HRA must continue to make housing assistance payments to the owner until the owner has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the tenant.

#### **HRA Policy**

The owner must inform the HRA when the owner has initiated eviction proceedings against the family and the family continues to reside in the unit.

The owner must inform the HRA when the owner has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the tenant and provide the HRA with a copy of such judgment or determination.

After the owner has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the tenant, the HRA will continue to make HAP payments to the owner until the family actually moves from the unit or until the family is physically evicted from the unit, whichever is earlier. The owner must inform the HRA of the date when the family actually moves from the unit or the family is physically evicted from the unit.

### **13-II.D. BREACH OF HAP CONTRACT [24 CFR 982.453]**

Any of the following actions by the owner constitutes a breach of the HAP contract:

- If the owner violates any obligations under the HAP contract including failure to maintain the unit in accordance with HQS
- If the owner has violated any obligation under any other HAP contract under Section 8
- If the owner has committed fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program
- For projects with mortgages insured by HUD or loans made by HUD, if the owner has failed to comply with the regulation for the applicable program; or if the owner has committed fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the mortgage or loan
- If the owner has engaged in drug-related criminal activity
- If the owner has committed any violent criminal activity

If the HRA determines that a breach of the HAP contract has occurred, it may exercise any of its rights and remedies under the HAP contract.

The HRA rights and remedies against the owner under the HAP contract include recovery of any HAP overpayment, suspension of housing assistance payments, abatement or reduction of the housing assistance payment, termination of the payment or termination of the HAP contract. The HRA may also obtain additional relief by judicial order or action.

The HRA must notify the owner of its determination and provide in writing the reasons for the determination. The notice may require the owner to take corrective action by an established deadline. The HRA must provide the owner with written notice of any reduction in housing assistance payments or the termination of the HAP contract.

#### HRA Policy

Before the HRA invokes a remedy against an owner, the HRA will evaluate all information and documents available to determine if the contract has been breached.

If relevant, the HRA will conduct an audit of the owner's records pertaining to the tenancy or unit.

If it is determined that the owner has breached the contract, the HRA will consider all of the relevant factors including the seriousness of the breach, the effect on the family, the owner's record of compliance and the number and seriousness of any prior HAP contract violations.

### **13-II.E. HAP CONTRACT TERM AND TERMINATIONS**

The term of the HAP contract runs concurrently with the term of the dwelling lease [24 CFR 982.451(a)(2)], beginning on the first day of the initial term of the lease and terminating on the last day of the term of the lease, including any lease term extensions.

The HAP contract and the housing assistance payments made under the HAP contract terminate if [HCV Guidebook pp.11-4 and 11-5, pg. 15-3]:

- The owner or the family terminates the lease;
- The lease expires;
- The HRA terminates the HAP contract;
- The HRA terminates assistance for the family;
- The family moves from the assisted unit. In this situation, the owner is entitled to keep the housing assistance payment for the month when the family moves out of the unit.
- 180 calendar days have elapsed since the HRA made the last housing assistance payment to the owner;
- The family is absent from the unit for longer than the maximum period permitted by the HRA;
- The Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) between the HRA and HUD expires
- The HRA elects to terminate the HAP contract.

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA may elect to terminate the HAP contract in each of the following situations:

Available program funding is not sufficient to support continued assistance for families in the program [24 CFR 982.454];

The unit does not meet HQS size requirements due to change in family composition [24 CFR 982.403] – see chapter 8;

The unit does not meet HQS [24 CFR 982.404] – see chapter 8;

The family breaks up [HUD Form 52641] – see chapter 3;

The owner breaches the HAP contract [24 CFR 982.453(b)] – see Section 13-II.D.

If the HRA terminates the HAP contract, the HRA must give the owner and the family written notice. The notice must specify the reasons for the termination and the effective date of the termination. Once a HAP contract is terminated, no further HAP payments may be made under that contract [HCV Guidebook pg.15-4].

#### HRA Policy

In all cases, the HAP contract terminates at the end of the calendar month that follows the calendar month in which the HRA gives written notice to the owner. The owner is not entitled to any housing assistance payment after this period and must return to the HRA any housing assistance payment received after this period.

If the family moves from the assisted unit into a new unit, even if the new unit is in the same building or complex as the assisted unit, the HAP contract for the assisted unit terminates. A new HAP contract would be required [HCV GB, p. 11-17].

When the family moves from an assisted unit into a new unit, the term of the HAP contract for the new unit may begin in the same month in which the family moves out of its old unit. This is not considered a duplicative subsidy [HCV GB, p. 8-22].



### **13-II.F. CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP / ASSIGNMENT OF THE HAP CONTRACT [HUD-52641]**

The HAP contract cannot be assigned to a new owner without the prior written consent of the HRA.

An owner under a HAP contract must notify the HRA in writing prior to a change in the legal ownership of the unit. The owner must supply all information as requested by the HRA.

Prior to approval of assignment to a new owner, the new owner must agree to be bound by and comply with the HAP contract. The agreement between the new owner and the former owner must be in writing and in a form that the HRA finds acceptable. The new owner must provide the HRA with a copy of the executed agreement.

#### HRA Policy

Assignment of the HAP contract will be approved only if the new owner is qualified to become an owner under the HCV program according to the policies in Section 13-I.D. of this chapter.

The HRA must receive notification from the existing owner or owner's agent including the name and address of the new HAP payee and the effective date of the assignment in order to change the HAP payee under an outstanding HAP contract.

Within 10 business days of receiving notification of a change in ownership, the HRA will inform the current owner in writing whether the assignment may take place.

The new owner must provide a written certification to the HRA that includes:

- Signed and notarized proof of sale (warranty deed, escrow statement or other document that shows the transfer of title and recorded deed);

- Rental License (or receipt showing rental license application and actual license within 90 days);

- HRA's Direct Deposit Authorization form along with a copy of a check or savings deposit slip;

- IRS Form W-9, if not already on file; and

- HRA's Change of Property Ownership form which includes the effective date of the HAP contract assignment, agreement to comply with the terms of the HAP contract, and certification that the new owner is not a prohibited relative.

If the new owner does not agree to an assignment of the HAP contract, or fails to provide the necessary documents, the HRA will terminate the HAP contract with the old owner. If the new owner wants to offer the family a new lease, and the family elects to stay with continued assistance, the HRA will process the leasing in accordance with the policies in Chapter 9.

### **13-II.G. FORECLOSURE [Notice PIH 2010-49]**

Families receiving HCV assistance are entitled to certain protections set forth under the Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act (PTFA). During the term of the lease, the new owner of the property does not have good cause to terminate the tenant's lease, unless the new owner will occupy the unit as their primary residence and has provided the tenant with at least a 90-day notice. In that case, the lease may be terminated effective on the date of sale, although the tenant is still entitled to a 90-day notice to vacate. Further, the new owner assumes interest in the lease between the prior owner and the tenant and to the HAP contract.

Any state or local law that provides longer time periods or other additional protections for tenants also applies.

#### HRA Policy

If a property is in foreclosure, the HRA will make all reasonable efforts to determine the status of the foreclosure and ownership of the property and will continue to make payments to the original owner until ownership legally transfers in accordance with the HAP contract.

The HRA will attempt to obtain a written acknowledgement of the assignment of the HAP contract from the successor in interest. This will include a request for owner information, including a tax identification number and payment instructions from the new owner. Even if the new owner does not acknowledge the assignment of the HAP contract in writing, the assignment is still effective by operation of law.

The HRA will inform the tenant that they must continue to pay rent in accordance with the lease, and if the new owner refuses to accept payment or cannot be identified, the tenant should pay rent into escrow. Failure to pay rent may constitute an independent ground for eviction.

In the event that the HRA is unable to make HAP payments to the new owner due to an action or inaction by the new owner that prevents such payments (e.g., rejection of payments or failure to maintain the property according to HQS), or due to an inability to identify the new owner, the HRA will either use the funds to pay:

The utilities that are the owner's responsibility after taking reasonable steps to notify the owner; except that if the unit has been or will be rendered uninhabitable due to termination or threat of termination of service, prior notice is not required. In the latter case, the HRA shall notify the owner within a reasonable time after making the utility payment; or

For the family's reasonable moving costs, including security deposit costs.

The HRA will also refer the tenant, as needed, to the local legal aid office in order to ensure adequate protection of the tenant's rights and enforcement of the successor in interest's performance under the HAP contract.

See Section 12-III.B for a discussion of foreclosure as it pertains to owner termination of tenancy.

## Chapter 14

### PROGRAM INTEGRITY

#### INTRODUCTION

The HRA is committed to ensuring that subsidy funds made available to the HRA are spent in accordance with HUD requirements.

This chapter covers HUD and HRA 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 HRA policies related to preventing, detecting, and investigating errors and program abuse.

Part II: Corrective Measures and Penalties. This part describes the corrective measures the HRA must and may take when errors or program abuses are found.



## **PART I: PREVENTING, DETECTING, AND INVESTIGATING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE**

### **14-I.A. PREVENTING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE**

HUD created the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system to provide HRAs with a powerful tool for preventing errors and detecting program abuse. HRAs are required to use the EIV system in its entirety in accordance with HUD administrative guidance [24 CFR 5.233]. HRAs are further required to:

- Provide applicants and participants with form HUD-52675, “Debts Owed to HRAs 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

#### HRA Policy

To ensure that the HRA’s HCV program is administered according to the highest ethical and legal standards, the HRA will employ a variety of techniques to ensure that both errors and intentional program abuse are rare.

The HRA will discuss program compliance and integrity issues during the voucher briefing sessions described in Chapter 5.

The HRA will provide each applicant and participant 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 HRA will provide each applicant and participant 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 HRA will require the head of each household to acknowledge receipt of the guide by signing a copy for retention in the family file.

The HRA will place a warning statement about the penalties for fraud (as described in 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 1010) on key HRA forms and form letters that request information from a family or owner.

HRA staff will be required to review and explain the contents of all HUD- and HRA-required forms prior to requesting family member signatures.

At every regular reexamination, HRA staff will explain any changes in HUD regulations or HRA policy that affect program participants.

The HRA will provide owners with ongoing information about the program, with an emphasis on actions and situations to avoid.

The HRA will provide each HRA employee with the necessary training on program rules and the organization’s standards of conduct and ethics.

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.

#### **14-I.B. DETECTING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE**

In addition to taking steps to prevent errors and program abuse, the HRA will use a variety of activities to detect errors and program abuse.

##### **Quality Control and Analysis of Data**

Under the Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP), HUD requires the HRA to review a random sample of tenant records annually to determine if the records conform to program requirements and to conduct quality control inspections of a sample of units to ensure HQS compliance [24 CFR, Part 985]. (See Chapter 16 for additional information about SEMAP requirements).

##### HRA Policy

In addition to the SEMAP quality control requirements, the HRA will employ a variety of methods to detect errors and program abuse.

The HRA routinely will use HUD and other non-HUD sources of up-front income verification. This includes any private or public databases available to the HRA.

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 HRA will compare family-reported income and expenditures to detect possible unreported income.

##### **Independent Audits and HUD Monitoring**

OMB Circular A-133 requires all HRAs that expend \$500,000 or more in federal awards annually to have an independent audit (IPA). In addition, HUD conducts periodic on-site and automated monitoring of HRA activities and notifies the HRA of errors and potential cases of program abuse.

##### HRA Policy

The HRA 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 HRA's error detection and abuse prevention efforts.

##### **Individual Reporting of Possible Errors and Program Abuse**

##### HRA Policy

The HRA will encourage staff, program participants, and the public to report possible program abuse.

## **14-I.C. INVESTIGATING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE**

### **When the HRA Will Investigate**

#### HRA Policy

The HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA will investigate when inconsistent or contradictory information is detected through file reviews and the verification process.

### **Consent to Release of Information [24 CFR 982.516]**

The HRA may investigate possible instances of error or abuse using all available HRA and public records. If necessary, the HRA will require HCV families to sign consent forms for the release of additional information.

### **Analysis and Findings**

#### HRA Policy

The HRA 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 HRA will determine (1) whether an error or program abuse has occurred, (2) whether any amount of money is owed the HRA, 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 HRA will enforce other corrective actions and penalties depends upon the nature of the error or program abuse.

### HRA Policy

In the case of family-caused errors or program abuse, the HRA will 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.

In the case of owner-caused errors or program abuse, the HRA will take into consideration (1) the seriousness of the offense, (2) the length of time since the violation has occurred, and (3) the effects of a particular remedy on family members who were not involved in the offense.

## **Notice and Appeals**

### HRA Policy

The HRA 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 HRA determined the error or program abuses, (3) the remedies to be employed, and (4) the family's right to appeal the results through the informal review or hearing process, if applicable (see Chapter 16).



## **PART II: CORRECTIVE MEASURES AND PENALTIES**

### **14-II.A. SUBSIDY UNDER- OR OVERPAYMENTS**

A subsidy under- or overpayment includes (1) an incorrect housing assistance payment to the owner, (2) an incorrect family share established for the family, and (3) an incorrect utility reimbursement to a family.

#### **Corrections**

Whether the incorrect subsidy determination is an overpayment or underpayment of subsidy, the HRA must promptly correct the HAP, family share, and any utility reimbursement prospectively.

##### HRA Policy

Increases in the family share will be implemented on the first of the month following a written 30-day notice.

Any decreases in family share will become effective the first of the month following the discovery of the error.

#### **Reimbursement**

Whether the family or owner is required to reimburse the HRA or the HRA is required to make retroactive subsidy payments to the owner or family depends upon which party is responsible for the incorrect subsidy payment and whether the action taken was an error or program abuse. Policies regarding reimbursement are discussed in the three sections that follow.

## **14-II.B. FAMILY-CAUSED ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE**

Family obligations and general administrative requirements for participating in the program are discussed throughout this plan. This section deals specifically with errors and program abuse by family members.

An incorrect subsidy 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 HRA to use incorrect information provided by a third party.

### **Family Reimbursement to HRA [HCV GB pp. 22-12 to 22-13]**

#### HRA Policy

In the case of family-caused errors or program abuse, the family will be required to repay any excess subsidy received. The HRA may, but is not required to, offer the family a repayment agreement in accordance with Chapter 16. If the family fails to repay the excess subsidy, the HRA will terminate the family's assistance in accordance with the policies in Chapter 12.

### **HRA Reimbursement to Family [HCV GB p. 22-12]**

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will not reimburse the family for any underpayment of assistance when the underpayment clearly is caused by the family.

## **Prohibited Actions**

An applicant or participant in the HCV program must not knowingly:

- Make a false statement to the HRA [Title 18 U.S.C. Section 1001].
- Commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program [24 CFR 982.552(c)(iv)].

### HRA Policy

Any of the following will be considered evidence of family program abuse:

Payment to the owner in excess of amounts authorized by the HRA for rent, security deposit, and additional services

Offering bribes or illegal gratuities to the HRA Board of Commissioners, employees, contractors, or other HRA representatives

Offering payments or other incentives to the owner or a third party as an inducement for the third party to make false or misleading statements to the HRA 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. income, 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 HRA 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 HRA may, at its discretion, impose any of the following remedies.

- The HRA may require the family to repay excess subsidy amounts paid by the HRA, as described earlier in this section.
- The HRA 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 12 (for participants).
- The HRA may deny or terminate the family's assistance following the policies set forth in Chapter 3 and Chapter 12 respectively.
- The HRA may refer the family for state or federal criminal prosecution as described in section 14-II.E.

## **14-II.C. OWNER-CAUSED ERROR OR PROGRAM ABUSE**

Owner requirements that are part of the regular process of offering, leasing, and maintaining a unit (e.g., HQS compliance, fair housing) are addressed in the appropriate chapters of this plan. This section focuses on errors and program abuse by owners.

An incorrect subsidy determination caused by an owner generally would be the result of an incorrect owner statement about the characteristics of the assisted unit (e.g., the number of bedrooms, which utilities are paid by the family). It also includes accepting duplicate housing assistance payments for the same unit in the same month, or after a family no longer resides in the unit.

### **Owner Reimbursement to the HRA**

In all cases of overpayment of subsidy caused by the owner, the owner must repay to the HRA any excess subsidy received. The HRA may recover overpaid amounts by withholding housing assistance payments due for subsequent months, or if the debt is large, the HRA may allow the owner to pay in installments over a period of time [HCV GB p. 22-13].

#### HRA Policy

In cases where the owner has received excess subsidy, the HRA will require the owner to repay the amount owed in accordance with the policies in Section 16-IV.B.

### **Prohibited Owner Actions**

An owner participating in the HCV program must not:

- Make any false statement to the HRA [Title 18 U.S.C. Section 1001].
- Commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program [24 CFR 982.453(a)(3)] including:

## HRA Policy

Any of the following will be considered evidence of owner program abuse:

- Charging the family rent above or below the amount specified by the HRA
- Charging a security deposit other than that specified in the family's lease
- Charging the family for services that are provided to unassisted tenants at no extra charge
- Knowingly accepting housing assistance payments for any month(s) after the family has vacated the unit
- Knowingly accepting incorrect or excess housing assistance payments
- Offering bribes or illegal gratuities to the HRA Board of Commissioners, employees, contractors, or other HRA representatives
- Offering payments or other incentives to an HCV family as an inducement for the family to make false or misleading statements to the HRA
- Residing in the unit with an assisted family
- Committing sexual or other harassment, either quid pro quo or hostile environment, based on the protected classes defined in Chapter 2
- Retaliating against any applicant or participant reporting/alleging sexual or other harassment, either quid pro quo or hostile environment, based on the protected classes defined in Chapter 2

## **Remedies and Penalties**

When the HRA determines that the owner has committed program abuse, the HRA may take any of the following actions:

- Require the owner to repay excess housing assistance payments, as discussed earlier in this section and in accordance with the policies in Chapter 16.
- Terminate the HAP contract (See Chapter 13).
- Bar the owner from future participation in any HRA programs.
- Refer the case to state or federal officials for criminal prosecution as described in section 14-II.E.

## **14-II.D. HRA-CAUSED ERRORS OR PROGRAM ABUSE**

The responsibilities and expectations of HRA staff with respect to normal program administration are discussed throughout this plan. This section specifically addresses actions of a HRA staff member that are considered errors or program abuse related to the HCV program. Additional standards of conduct may be provided in the HRA personnel policy.

HRA-caused incorrect subsidy determinations include (1) failing to correctly apply HCV rules regarding family composition, income, assets, and expenses, (2) assigning the incorrect voucher size to a family, and (3) errors in calculation.

### **Repayment to the HRA**

Neither a family nor an owner is required to repay an overpayment of subsidy if the error or program abuse is caused by HRA staff [HCV GB. 22-12].

### **HRA Reimbursement to Family or Owner**

The HRA must reimburse a family for any underpayment of subsidy, regardless of whether the underpayment was the result of staff-caused error or staff or owner program abuse. Funds for this reimbursement must come from the HRA's administrative fee reserves [HCV GB p. 22-12].

### **Prohibited Activities**

#### HRA Policy

Any of the following will be considered evidence of program abuse by HRA staff:

- Failing to comply with any HCV program requirements for personal gain

- Failing to comply with any HCV program requirements as a result of a conflict of interest relationship with any applicant, participant, or owner

- Seeking or accepting anything of material value from applicants, participating families, vendors, owners, contractors, or other persons who provide services or materials to the HRA

- Disclosing confidential or proprietary information to outside parties

- Gaining profit as a result of insider knowledge of HRA activities, policies, or practices

- Misappropriating or misusing HCV funds

- Destroying, concealing, removing, or inappropriately using any records related to the HCV program

- Committing any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program

## **14-II.E. CRIMINAL PROSECUTION**

### HRA Policy

When the HRA determines that program abuse by an owner, family, or HRA staff member has occurred and the amount of overpaid subsidy meets or exceeds the threshold for prosecution under local or state law, the HRA will refer the matter to the appropriate entity for prosecution. When the amount of overpaid assistance 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 HCV program will be referred to the appropriate local, state, or federal entity.

#### **14-II.F. FRAUD AND PROGRAM ABUSE RECOVERIES**

The HRA may retain a portion of program fraud losses that the HRA recovers from a family or owner through litigation, court order, or a repayment agreement [24 CFR 982.163].

The HRA must be the principal party initiating or sustaining the action to recover amounts due from tenants that are due as a result of fraud and abuse. 24 CFR 792.202 permits the HRA to retain the greater of:

- 50 percent of the amount it actually collects from a judgment, litigation (including settlement of a lawsuit) or an administrative repayment agreement, or
- Reasonable and necessary costs that the HRA incurs related to the collection including costs of investigation, legal fees, and agency collection fees.

The family must be afforded the opportunity for an informal hearing in accordance with requirements in 24 CFR 982.555.

If HUD incurs costs on behalf of the HRA related to the collection, these costs must be deducted from the amount retained by the HRA.



## **Chapter 15**

### **SPECIAL HOUSING TYPES**

[24 CFR 982 Subpart M]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The HRA may permit a family to use any of the special housing types discussed in this chapter. However, the HRA is not required to permit families receiving assistance in its jurisdiction to use these housing types, except that HRAs must permit use of any special housing type if needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability. The HRA also may limit the number of families who receive HCV assistance in these housing types and cannot require families to use a particular housing type. No special funding is provided for special housing types.

#### HRA Policy

Families will be permitted to use the following special housing types:

- A. Shared Housing
- B. Manufactured Homes (including manufactured home space rental)

Special housing types include single room occupancy (SRO), congregate housing, group homes, shared housing, cooperative housing, manufactured homes where the family owns the home and leases the space, and homeownership [24 CFR 982.601].

This chapter consists of the following seven parts. Each part contains a description of the housing type and any special requirements associated with it. Except as modified by this chapter, the general requirements of the HCV program apply to special housing types.

#### Part I: Single Room Occupancy

#### Part II: Congregate Housing

#### Part III: Group Homes

#### Part IV: Shared Housing

#### Part V: Cooperative Housing

#### Part VI: Manufactured Homes (including manufactured home space rental)

#### Part VII: Homeownership



## **PART I: SINGLE ROOM OCCUPANCY**

[24 CFR 982.602 through 982.605]

### **15-I.A. OVERVIEW**

A single room occupancy (SRO) unit provides living and sleeping space for the exclusive use of the occupant but requires the occupant to share sanitary and/or food preparation facilities with others. More than one person may not occupy an SRO unit. HCV regulations do not limit the number of units in an SRO facility, but the size of a facility may be limited by local ordinances.

When providing HCV assistance in an SRO unit, a separate lease and HAP contract are executed for each assisted person, and the standard form of the HAP contract is used.

### **15-I.B. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE, AND HAP CALCULATION**

The payment standard for SRO housing is 75 percent of the zero-bedroom payment standard amount on the HRA's payment standard schedule.

The utility allowance for an assisted person residing in SRO housing is 75 percent of the zero-bedroom utility allowance.

The HAP for an assisted occupant in an SRO facility is the lower of the SRO payment standard amount minus the TTP or the gross rent for the unit minus the TTP.

### **15-I.C. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS)**

HQS requirements described in Chapter 8 apply to SRO housing except as modified below.

- *Access:* Access doors to the SRO unit must have working locks for privacy. The occupant must be able to access the unit without going through any other unit. Each unit must have immediate access to two or more approved means of exit from the building, appropriately marked and leading to safe and open space at ground level. The SRO unit must also have any other means of exit required by State or local law.
- *Fire Safety:* All SRO facilities must have a sprinkler system that protects major spaces. "Major spaces" are defined as hallways, common areas, and any other areas specified in local fire, building, or safety codes. SROs must also have hard-wired smoke detectors, and any other fire and safety equipment required by state or local law.

Sanitary facilities and space and security standards must meet local code requirements for SRO housing. In the absence of local code standards the requirements discussed below apply [24 CFR 982.605].

- *Sanitary Facilities:* At least one flush toilet that can be used in privacy, a lavatory basin, and a bathtub or shower in proper operating condition must be provided for each six persons (or fewer) residing in the SRO facility. If the SRO units are leased only to men, flush urinals may be substituted for up to one half of the required number of toilets. Sanitary facilities must be reasonably accessible from a common hall or passageway, and may not be located more than one floor above or below the SRO unit. They may not be located below grade unless the SRO units are located on that level.
- *Space and Security:* An SRO unit must contain at least 110 square feet of floor space, and at least four square feet of closet space with an unobstructed height of at least five feet, for use by the occupant. If the closet space is less than four square feet, the habitable floor space in the SRO unit must be increased by the amount of the deficiency. Exterior doors and windows accessible from outside the SRO unit must be lockable.

Because no children live in SRO housing, the housing quality standards applicable to lead-based paint do not apply.

## **PART II: CONGREGATE HOUSING**

[24 CFR 982.606 through 982.609]

### **15-II.A. OVERVIEW**

Congregate housing is intended for use by elderly persons or persons with disabilities. A congregate housing facility contains a shared central kitchen and dining area and a private living area for the individual household that includes at least a living room, bedroom and bathroom. Food service for residents must be provided.

If approved by the HRA, a family member or live-in aide may reside with the elderly person or person with disabilities. The HRA must approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

When providing HCV assistance in congregate housing, a separate lease and HAP contract are executed for each assisted family, and the standard form of the HAP contract is used.

## **15-II.B. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE, AND HAP CALCULATION**

The payment standard for an individual unit in a congregate housing facility is based on the number of rooms in the private living area. If there is only one room in the unit (not including the bathroom or the kitchen, if a kitchen is provided), the HRA must use the payment standard for a zero-bedroom unit. If the unit has two or more rooms (other than the bathroom and the kitchen), the HRA must use the one-bedroom payment standard.

The HAP for an assisted occupant in a congregate housing facility is the lower of the applicable payment standard minus the TTP or the gross rent for the unit minus the TTP.

The gross rent for the unit for the purpose of calculating HCV assistance is the shelter portion (including utilities) of the resident's monthly housing expense only. The residents' costs for food service should not be included in the rent for a congregate housing unit.

## **15-II.C. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS**

HQS requirements as described in Chapter 8 apply to congregate housing except for the requirements stated below.

Congregate housing must have (1) a refrigerator of appropriate size in the private living area of each resident; (2) a central kitchen and dining facilities located within the premises and accessible to the residents, and (3) food service for the residents, that is not provided by the residents themselves.

The housing quality standards applicable to lead-based paint do not apply.

## **PART III: GROUP HOME**

[24 CFR 982.610 through 982.614 and HCV GB p. 7-4]

### **15-III.A. OVERVIEW**

A group home is a state-licensed facility intended for occupancy by elderly persons and/or persons with disabilities. Except for live-in aides, all persons living in a group home, whether assisted or not, must be elderly persons or persons with disabilities. Persons living in a group home must not require continuous medical or nursing care.

A group home consists of bedrooms for residents, which can be shared by no more than two people, and a living room, kitchen, dining area, bathroom, and other appropriate social, recreational, or community space that may be shared with other residents.

No more than 12 persons may reside in a group home including assisted and unassisted residents and any live-in aides.

If approved by the HRA, a live-in aide may live in the group home with a person with disabilities. The HRA must approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

When providing HCV assistance in a group home, a separate lease and HAP contract is executed for each assisted family, and the standard form of the HAP contract is used.

### **15-III.B. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE, AND HAP CALCULATION**

Unless there is a live-in aide, the family unit size for an assisted occupant of a group home must be zero- or one-bedroom, depending on the HRA's subsidy standard. If there is a live-in aide, the aide must be counted in determining the household's unit size.

The payment standard used to calculate the HAP is the lower of the payment standard for the family unit size or the prorata share of the payment standard for the group home size. The prorata share is calculated by dividing the number of persons in the assisted household by the number of persons (assisted and unassisted) living in the group home.

The HAP for an assisted occupant in a group home is the lower of the payment standard minus the TTP or the gross rent minus the TTP.

The utility allowance for an assisted occupant in a group home is the prorata share of the utility allowance for the group home.

The rents paid for participants residing in group homes are subject to generally applicable standards for rent reasonableness. The rent for an assisted person must not exceed the prorata portion of the reasonable rent for the group home. In determining reasonable rent, the HRA should consider whether sanitary facilities and facilities for food preparation and service are common facilities or private facilities.

### 15-III.C. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

HQS requirements described in Chapter 8 apply to group homes except for the requirements stated below.

- *Sanitary Facilities:* A group home must have at least one bathroom in the facility, with a flush toilet that can be used in privacy, a fixed basin with hot and cold running water, and a shower or bathtub with hot and cold running water. A group home may contain private or common bathrooms. However, no more than four residents can be required to share a bathroom.
- *Food Preparation and Service:* Group home units must contain a kitchen and dining area with adequate space to store, prepare, and serve food. The facilities for food preparation and service may be private or may be shared by the residents. The kitchen must contain a range, an oven, a refrigerator, and a sink with hot and cold running water. The sink must drain into an approvable public or private disposal system.
- *Space and Security:* Group homes must contain at least one bedroom of appropriate size for every two people, and a living room, kitchen, dining area, bathroom, and other appropriate social, recreational, or community space that may be shared with other residents.
- *Structure and Material:* To avoid any threat to the health and safety of the residents, group homes must be structurally sound. Elevators must be in good condition. Group homes must be accessible to and usable by residents with disabilities.
- *Site and Neighborhood:* Group homes must be located in a residential setting. The site and neighborhood should be reasonably free from hazards to the health, safety, and general welfare of the residents, and should not be subject to serious adverse conditions, such as:
  - Dangerous walks or steps
  - Instability
  - Flooding, poor drainage
  - Septic tank back-ups
  - Sewage hazards
  - Mud slides
  - Abnormal air pollution
  - Smoke or dust
  - Excessive noise
  - Vibrations or vehicular traffic
  - Excessive accumulations of trash
  - Vermin or rodent infestation, and
  - Fire hazards.

The housing quality standards applicable to lead-based paint do not apply.



## **PART IV: SHARED HOUSING**

[24 CFR 982.615 through 982.618]

### **15-IV.A. OVERVIEW**

Shared housing is a single housing unit occupied by an assisted family and another resident or residents. The shared unit consists of both common space for use by the occupants of the unit and separate private space for each assisted family.

An assisted family may share a unit with other persons assisted under the HCV program or with other unassisted persons. The owner of a shared housing unit may reside in the unit, but housing assistance may not be paid on behalf of the owner. The resident owner may not be related by blood or marriage to the assisted family.

If approved by the HRA, a live-in aide may reside with the family to care for a person with disabilities. The HRA must approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

When providing HCV assistance in shared housing, a separate lease and HAP contract are executed for each assisted family, and the standard form of the HAP contract is used.

### **15-IV.B. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE AND HAP CALCULATION**

The payment standard for a family in shared housing is the lower of the payment standard for the family unit size or the prorata share of the payment standard for the shared housing unit size.

The prorata share is calculated by dividing the number of bedrooms available for occupancy by the assisted family in the private space by the total number of bedrooms in the unit.

The HAP for a family in shared housing is the lower of the payment standard minus the TTP or the gross rent minus the TTP. The utility allowance for an assisted family living in shared housing is the lower of the utility allowance for the family unit size (voucher size) or the prorata share of the utility allowance for the shared housing unit.

**Example:** A family holds a 2-bedroom voucher. The family decides to occupy 3 out of 4 bedrooms available in the unit.

The utility allowance for a 4-bedroom unit equals \$200

The utility allowance for a 2-bedroom unit equals \$100

The prorata share of the utility allowance is \$150 ( $\frac{3}{4}$  of \$200)

The HRA will use the 2-bedroom utility allowance of \$100.

The rents paid for families living in shared housing are subject to generally applicable standards for rent reasonableness. The rent paid to the owner for the assisted family must not exceed the pro-rata portion of the reasonable rent for the shared unit. In determining reasonable rent, the HRA should consider whether sanitary and food preparation areas are private or shared.

#### **15-IV.C. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS**

The HRA may not give approval to reside in shared housing unless the entire unit, including the portion of the unit available for use by the assisted family under its lease, meets the housing quality standards.

HQS requirements described in Chapter 8 apply to shared housing except for the requirements stated below.

- *Facilities Available for the Family:* Facilities available to the assisted family, whether shared or private, must include a living room, a bathroom, and food preparation and refuse disposal facilities.
- *Space and Security:* The entire unit must provide adequate space and security for all assisted and unassisted residents. The private space for each assisted family must contain at least one bedroom for each two persons in the family. The number of bedrooms in the private space of an assisted family must not be less than the family unit size. A zero-bedroom or one-bedroom unit may not be used for shared housing.

## **PART V: COOPERATIVE HOUSING**

[24 CFR 982.619]

### **15-V.A. OVERVIEW**

This part applies to rental assistance for a cooperative member residing in cooperative housing. It does not apply to assistance for a cooperative member who has purchased membership under the HCV homeownership option, or to rental assistance for a family that leases a cooperative housing unit from a cooperative member.

A cooperative is a form of ownership (nonprofit corporation or association) in which the residents purchase memberships in the ownership entity. Rather than being charged “rent” a cooperative member is charged a “carrying charge.”

When providing HCV assistance in cooperative housing, the standard form of the HAP contract is used.

### **15-V.B. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE AND HAP CALCULATION**

The payment standard and utility allowance are determined according to regular HCV program requirements.

The HAP for a cooperative housing unit is the lower of the payment standard minus the TTP or the monthly carrying charge for the unit, plus any utility allowance, minus the TTP. The monthly carrying charge includes the member’s share of the cooperative debt service, operating expenses, and necessary payments to cooperative reserve funds. The carrying charge does not include down payments or other payments to purchase the cooperative unit or to amortize a loan made to the family for this purpose.

### **15-V.C. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS**

All standard HQS requirements apply to cooperative housing units. There are no additional HQS requirements.



## **PART VI: MANUFACTURED HOMES**

[24 CFR 982.620 through 982.624; FR Notice 1/18/17]

### **15-VI.A. OVERVIEW**

A manufactured home is a manufactured structure, transportable in one or more parts, that is built on a permanent chassis, and designed for use as a principal place of residence. HCV-assisted families may occupy manufactured homes in two different ways.

(1) A family can choose to rent a manufactured home already installed on a space and the HRA must permit it. In this instance program rules are the same as when a family rents any other residential housing, except that there are special HQS requirements as provided in 15-VI.D below.

(2) HUD also permits an otherwise eligible family that owns a manufactured home to rent a space for the manufactured home and receive HCV assistance with the rent for the space as well as certain other housing expenses. HRAs may, but are not required to, provide assistance for such families.

### **15-VI.B. SPECIAL POLICIES FOR MANUFACTURED HOME OWNERS WHO LEASE A SPACE**

#### **Family Income**

In determining the annual income of families leasing manufactured home spaces, the value of the family's equity in the manufactured home in which the family resides is not counted as a family asset.

#### **Lease and HAP Contract**

There is a separate Tenancy Addendum (Form 52642-a) and separate HAP Contract (Form 52642) for this special housing type.

## **15-VLC. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE AND HAP CALCULATION [FR Notice 1/18/17]**

### **Payment Standards**

The HRA payment standard for manufactured homes is determined in accordance with 24 CFR 982.505 and is the payment standard used for the HRA's HCV program. It is based on the applicable FMR for the area in which the manufactured home space is located.

The payment standard for the family is the lower of the family unit size (voucher size) or the payment standard for the number of bedrooms in the manufactured home.

### **Utility Allowance**

The HRA must establish utility allowances for manufactured home space rental. For the first 12 months of the initial lease term only, the allowance must include an amount for a utility hook-up charge if the family actually incurred a hook-up charge because of a move. This allowance will not be given to a family that leases in place. Utility allowances for manufactured home space must not include the costs of digging a well or installing a septic system.

If the amount of the monthly assistance payment for a family exceeds the monthly rent for the manufactured home space (including the owner's monthly management and maintenance charges), the HRA may pay the remainder to the family, lender, or utility company.

### **Space Rent**

The rent for the manufactured home space (including other eligible housing expenses) is the total of:

- The rent charged for the manufactured home space;
- Owner maintenance and management charges for the space;
- The monthly payments made by the family to amortize the cost of purchasing the manufactured home, including any required insurance and property taxes; and
- The applicable allowance for tenant-paid utilities.

**Amortization Costs**

The monthly payment made by the family to amortize the cost of purchasing the manufactured home is the debt service established at the time of application to a lender for financing the purchase of the manufactured home if monthly payments are still being made. Any increase in debt service due to refinancing after purchase of the home may not be included in the amortization cost. Debt service for set-up charges incurred by a family may be included in the monthly amortization payments made by the family. In addition, set-up charges incurred before the family became an assisted family may be included in the amortization cost if monthly payments are still being made to amortize the charges.

**Housing Assistance Payment**

The HAP for a manufactured home space under the housing choice voucher program is the lower of the payment standard minus the TTP or the manufactured home space rent (including other eligible housing expenses) minus the TTP.

**Rent Reasonableness**

Initially, and annually thereafter the HRA must determine that the rent for the manufactured home space is reasonable based on rents for comparable manufactured home spaces. The HRA must consider the location and size of the space, and any services and maintenance to be provided by the owner. By accepting the monthly HAP check, the owner certifies that the rent does not exceed rents charged by the owner for comparable unassisted spaces in the manufactured home park or elsewhere.

## **15-VI.D. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS**

Under either type of occupancy described in 15-VI.A above, the manufactured home must meet all HQS performance requirements and acceptability criteria discussed in Chapter 8 of this plan. In addition, the following requirement applies:

### ***Manufactured Home Tie-Down***

A manufactured home must be placed on the site in a stable manner, and must be free from hazards such as sliding or wind damage. The home must be securely anchored by a tie-down device that distributes and transfers the loads imposed by the unit to appropriate ground anchors to resist overturning and sliding.



## **PART VII: HOMEOWNERSHIP**

[24 CFR 982.625 through 982.643]

### **15-VII.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR 982.625]**

The homeownership option is used to assist a family residing in a home purchased and owned by one or more members of the family. A family assisted under this option may be newly admitted or an existing participant in the HCV program. The HRA must have the capacity to operate a successful HCV homeownership program as defined by the regulations.

There are two forms of homeownership assistance described in the regulations: monthly homeownership assistance payments and single down payment assistance grants. However, HRAs may not offer down payment assistance until and unless funding is allocated by Congress. Since this has not yet happened, only monthly homeownership assistance may be offered.

The HRA must offer homeownership assistance if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. It is the sole responsibility of the HRA to determine whether it is reasonable to implement a homeownership program as a reasonable accommodation. The HRA must determine what is reasonable based on the specific circumstances and individual needs of the person with a disability. The HRA may determine that it is not reasonable to offer homeownership assistance as a reasonable accommodation in cases where the HRA has otherwise opted not to implement a homeownership program.

The HRA must approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

## **15-VII.B. FAMILY ELIGIBILITY [24 CFR 982.627]**

The family must meet all of the requirements listed below before the commencement of homeownership assistance. The HRA may also establish additional initial requirements as long as they are described in the HRA administrative plan.

- The family must have been admitted to the Housing Choice Voucher program.
- The family must qualify as a first-time homeowner, or may be a cooperative member.
- The family must meet the Federal minimum income requirement. The family must have a gross annual income equal to the Federal minimum wage multiplied by 2000, based on the income of adult family members who will own the home. The HRA may establish a higher income standard for families. However, a family that meets the federal minimum income requirement (but not the HRA's requirement) will be considered to meet the minimum income requirement if it can demonstrate that it has been pre-qualified or pre-approved for financing that is sufficient to purchase an eligible unit.
- For disabled families, the minimum income requirement is equal to the current SSI monthly payment for an individual living alone, multiplied by 12.
- For elderly or disabled families, welfare assistance payments for adult family members who will own the home will be included in determining whether the family meets the minimum income requirement. It will not be included for other families.
- The family must satisfy the employment requirements by demonstrating that one or more adult members of the family who will own the home at commencement of homeownership assistance is currently employed on a full-time basis (the term 'full-time employment' means not less than an average of 30 hours per week); and has been continuously so employed during the year before commencement of homeownership assistance for the family.
- The employment requirement does not apply to elderly and disabled families. In addition, if a family, other than an elderly or disabled family includes a person with disabilities, the HRA must grant an exemption from the employment requirement if the HRA determines that it is needed as a reasonable accommodation.
- The family has not defaulted on a mortgage securing debt to purchase a home under the homeownership option
- Except for cooperative members who have acquired cooperative membership shares prior to commencement of homeownership assistance, no family member has a present ownership interest in a residence at the commencement of homeownership assistance for the purchase of any home.
- Except for cooperative members who have acquired cooperative membership shares prior to the commencement of homeownership assistance, the family has entered a contract of sale in accordance with 24 CFR 982.631(c).

### **15-VII.C. SELECTION OF FAMILIES [24 CFR 982.626]**

Unless otherwise provided (under the homeownership option), the HRA may limit homeownership assistance to families or purposes defined by the HRA, and may prescribe additional requirements for commencement of homeownership assistance for a family. Any such limits or additional requirements must be described in the HRA administrative plan.

If the HRA limits the number of families that may participate in the homeownership option, the HRA must establish a system by which to select families to participate.

### **15-VII.D. ELIGIBLE UNITS [24 CFR 982.628]**

In order for a unit to be eligible, the HRA must determine that the unit satisfies all of the following requirements:

- The unit must meet HUD's "eligible housing" requirements. The unit may not be any of the following:
  - A public housing or Indian housing unit;
  - A unit receiving Section 8 project-based assistance;
  - A nursing home, board and care home, or facility providing continual psychiatric, medical or nursing services;
  - A college or other school dormitory;
  - On the grounds of penal, reformatory, medical, mental, or similar public or private institutions.
- The unit must be under construction or already exist at the time the family enters into the contract of sale.
- The unit must be a one-unit property or a single dwelling unit in a cooperative or condominium.
- The unit must have been inspected by the HRA and by an independent inspector designated by the family.
- The unit must meet Housing Quality Standards (see Chapter 8).
- For a unit where the family will not own fee title to the real property (such as a manufactured home), the home must have a permanent foundation and the family must have the right to occupy the site for at least 40 years.

- For HRA-owned units all of the following conditions must be satisfied:
  - The HRA informs the family, both orally and in writing, that the family has the right to purchase any eligible unit and a HRA-owned unit is freely selected by the family without HRA pressure or steering;
  - The unit is not ineligible housing;
  - The HRA obtains the services of an independent agency to inspect the unit for compliance with HQS, review the independent inspection report, review the contract of sale, determine the reasonableness of the sales price and any HRA provided financing. All of these actions must be completed in accordance with program requirements.

The HRA must not approve the unit if the HRA has been informed that the seller is debarred, suspended, or subject to a limited denial of participation.

#### **15-VII.E. ADDITIONAL HRA REQUIREMENTS FOR SEARCH AND PURCHASE [24 CFR 982.629]**

It is the family's responsibility to find a home that meets the criteria for voucher homeownership assistance. The HRA may establish the maximum time that will be allowed for a family to locate and purchase a home, and may require the family to report on their progress in finding and purchasing a home. If the family is unable to purchase a home within the maximum time established by the HRA, the HRA may issue the family a voucher to lease a unit or place the family's name on the waiting list for a voucher.

## **15-VII.F. HOMEOWNERSHIP COUNSELING [24 CFR 982.630]**

Before commencement of homeownership assistance for a family, the family must attend and satisfactorily complete the pre-assistance homeownership and housing counseling program required by the HRA. HUD suggests the following topics for the HRA-required pre-assistance counseling:

- Home maintenance (including care of the grounds);
- Budgeting and money management;
- Credit counseling;
- How to negotiate the purchase price of a home;
- How to obtain homeownership financing and loan pre-approvals, including a description of types of financing that may be available, and the pros and cons of different types of financing;
- How to find a home, including information about homeownership opportunities, schools, and transportation in the HRA jurisdiction;
- Advantages of purchasing a home in an area that does not have a high concentration of low-income families and how to locate homes in such areas;
- Information on fair housing, including fair housing lending and local fair housing enforcement agencies; and
- Information about the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (12 U.S.C. 2601 et seq.) (RESPA), state and Federal truth-in-lending laws, and how to identify and avoid loans with oppressive terms and conditions.

The HRA may adapt the subjects covered in pre-assistance counseling (as listed) to local circumstances and the needs of individual families.

The HRA may also offer additional counseling after commencement of homeownership assistance (ongoing counseling). If the HRA offers a program of ongoing counseling for participants in the homeownership option, the HRA shall have discretion to determine whether the family is required to participate in the ongoing counseling.

If the HRA does not use a HUD-approved housing counseling agency to provide the counseling, the HRA should ensure that its counseling program is consistent with the counseling provided under HUD's Housing Counseling program.

## **15-VII.G. HOME INSPECTIONS, CONTRACT OF SALE, AND HRA DISAPPROVAL OF SELLER [24 CFR 982.631]**

### **Home Inspections**

The HRA may not commence monthly homeownership assistance payments for a family until the HRA has inspected the unit and has determined that the unit passes HQS.

An independent professional inspector selected by and paid for by the family must also inspect the unit. The independent inspection must cover major building systems and components, including foundation and structure, housing interior and exterior, and the roofing, plumbing, electrical, and heating systems. The independent inspector must be qualified to report on property conditions, including major building systems and components.

The HRA may not require the family to use an independent inspector selected by the HRA. The independent inspector may not be a HRA employee or contractor, or other person under control of the HRA. However, the HRA may establish standards for qualification of inspectors selected by families under the homeownership option.

The HRA may disapprove a unit for assistance based on information in the independent inspector's report, even if the unit was found to comply with HQS.

### **Contract of Sale**

Before commencement of monthly homeownership assistance payments, a member or members of the family must enter into a contract of sale with the seller of the unit to be acquired by the family. The family must give the HRA a copy of the contract of sale. The contract of sale must:

- Specify the price and other terms of sale by the seller to the purchaser;
- Provide that the purchaser will arrange for a pre-purchase inspection of the dwelling unit by an independent inspector selected by the purchaser;
- Provide that the purchaser is not obligated to purchase the unit unless the inspection is satisfactory to the purchaser;
- Provide that the purchaser is not obligated to pay for any necessary repairs; and
- Contain a certification from the seller that the seller has not been debarred, suspended, or subject to a limited denial of participation under CFR part 24.

### **Disapproval of a Seller**

In its administrative discretion, the HRA may deny approval of a seller for the same reasons a HRA may disapprove an owner under the regular HCV program [see 24 CFR 982.306(c)].

#### **15-VII.H. FINANCING [24 CFR 982.632]**

The HRA may establish requirements for financing purchase of a home under the homeownership option. This may include requirements concerning qualification of lenders, terms of financing, restrictions concerning debt secured by the home, lender qualifications, loan terms, and affordability of the debt. The HRA must establish policies describing these requirements in the administrative plan.

A HRA may not require that families acquire financing from one or more specified lenders, thereby restricting the family's ability to secure favorable financing terms.

#### **15-VII.I. CONTINUED ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS; FAMILY OBLIGATIONS [24 CFR 982.633]**

Homeownership assistance may only be paid while the family is residing in the home. If the family moves out of the home, the HRA may not continue homeownership assistance after the month when the family moves out. The family or lender is not required to refund to the HRA the homeownership assistance for the month when the family moves out.

Before commencement of homeownership assistance, the family must execute a statement in which the family agrees to comply with all family obligations under the homeownership option.

The family must comply with the following obligations:

- The family must comply with the terms of the mortgage securing debt incurred to purchase the home, or any refinancing of such debt.
- The family may not convey or transfer ownership of the home, except for purposes of financing, refinancing, or pending settlement of the estate of a deceased family member. Use and occupancy of the home are subject to 24 CFR 982.551 (h) and (i).
- The family must supply information to the HRA or HUD as specified in 24 CFR 982.551(b). The family must further supply any information required by the HRA or HUD concerning mortgage financing or refinancing, sale or transfer of any interest in the home, or homeownership expenses.
- The family must notify the HRA before moving out of the home.
- The family must notify the HRA if the family defaults on the mortgage used to purchase the home.
- No family member may have any ownership interest in any other residential property.
- The family must comply with the obligations of a participant family described in 24 CFR 982.551, except for the following provisions which do not apply to assistance under the homeownership option: 24 CFR 982.551(c), (d), (e), (f), (g) and (j).

#### **15-VII.J. MAXIMUM TERM OF HOMEOWNER ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.634]**

Except in the case of a family that qualifies as an elderly or disabled family, other family members (described below) shall not receive homeownership assistance for more than:

- Fifteen years, if the initial mortgage incurred to finance purchase of the home has a term of 20 years or longer; or
- Ten years, in all other cases.

The maximum term described above applies to any member of the family who:

- Has an ownership interest in the unit during the time that homeownership payments are made; or
- Is the spouse of any member of the household who has an ownership interest in the unit during the time homeownership payments are made.

In the case of an elderly family, the exception only applies if the family qualifies as an elderly family at the start of homeownership assistance. In the case of a disabled family, the exception applies if at any time during receipt of homeownership assistance the family qualifies as a disabled family.

If, during the course of homeownership assistance, the family ceases to qualify as a disabled or elderly family, the maximum term becomes applicable from the date homeownership assistance commenced. However, such a family must be provided at least 6 months of homeownership assistance after the maximum term becomes applicable (provided the family is otherwise eligible to receive homeownership assistance).

If the family has received such assistance for different homes, or from different HRAs, the total of such assistance terms is subject to the maximum term described in this part.

#### **15-VII.K. HOMEOWNERSHIP ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS AND HOMEOWNERSHIP EXPENSES [24 CFR 982.635]**

The monthly homeownership assistance payment is the lower of: the voucher payment standard minus the total tenant payment, or the monthly homeownership expenses minus the total tenant payment.

In determining the amount of the homeownership assistance payment, the HRA will use the same payment standard schedule, payment standard amounts, and subsidy standards as those described elsewhere in this plan for the Housing Choice Voucher program. The payment standard for a family is the greater of (i) The payment standard as determined at the commencement of homeownership assistance for occupancy of the home, or (ii) The payment standard at the most recent regular reexamination of family income and composition since the commencement of homeownership assistance for occupancy of the home.

The HRA may pay the homeownership assistance payments directly to the family, or at the HRA's discretion, to a lender on behalf of the family. If the assistance payment exceeds the amount due to the lender, the HRA must pay the excess directly to the family.



Homeownership assistance for a family terminates automatically 180 calendar days after the last homeownership assistance payment on behalf of the family. However, a HRA may grant relief from this requirement in those cases where automatic termination would result in extreme hardship for the family.

The HRA must adopt policies for determining the amount of homeownership expenses to be allowed by the HRA in accordance with HUD requirements.

Homeownership expenses (not including cooperatives) only include amounts allowed by the HRA to cover:

- Principal and interest on initial mortgage debt, any refinancing of such debt, and any mortgage insurance premium incurred to finance purchase of the home;
- Real estate taxes and public assessments on the home;
- Home insurance;
- The HRA allowance for maintenance expenses;
- The HRA allowance for costs of major repairs and replacements;
- The HRA utility allowance for the home;
- Principal and interest on mortgage debt incurred to finance costs for major repairs, replacements or improvements for the home. If a member of the family is a person with disabilities, such debt may include debt incurred by the family to finance costs needed to make the home accessible for such person, if the HRA determines that allowance of such costs as homeownership expenses is needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the homeownership option is readily accessible to and usable by such person;
- Land lease payments where a family does not own fee title to the real property on which the home is located; [see 24 CFR 982.628(b)].
- For a condominium unit, condominium operating charges or maintenance fees assessed by the condominium homeowner association.

Homeownership expenses for a cooperative member may only include amounts allowed by the HRA to cover:

- The cooperative charge under the cooperative occupancy agreement including payment for real estate taxes and public assessments on the home;
- Principal and interest on initial debt incurred to finance purchase of cooperative membership shares and any refinancing of such debt;
- Home insurance;
- The HRA allowance for maintenance expenses;
- The HRA allowance for costs of major repairs and replacements;
- The HRA utility allowance for the home; and
- Principal and interest on debt incurred to finance major repairs, replacements or improvements for the home. If a member of the family is a person with disabilities, such debt may include debt incurred by the family to finance costs needed to make the home accessible for such person, if the HRA determines that allowance of such costs as homeownership expenses is needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the homeownership option is readily accessible to and usable by such person.
- Cooperative operating charges or maintenance fees assessed by the cooperative homeowner association.

#### **15-VII.L. PORTABILITY [24 CFR 982.636, 982.637, 982.353(b) and (c), 982.552, 982.553]**

Subject to the restrictions on portability included in HUD regulations and HRA policies, a family may exercise portability if the receiving HRA is administering a voucher homeownership program and accepting new homeownership families. The receiving HRA may absorb the family into its voucher program, or bill the initial HRA.

The family must attend the briefing and counseling sessions required by the receiving HRA. The receiving HRA will determine whether the financing for, and the physical condition of the unit, are acceptable. The receiving HRA must promptly notify the initial HRA if the family has purchased an eligible unit under the program, or if the family is unable to purchase a home within the maximum time established by the HRA.

#### **15-VII.M. MOVING WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.637]**

A family receiving homeownership assistance may move with continued tenant-based assistance. The family may move with voucher rental assistance or with voucher homeownership assistance. Continued tenant-based assistance for a new unit cannot begin so long as any family member holds title to the prior home.

The HRA may deny permission to move to a new unit with continued voucher assistance:

- If the HRA has insufficient funding to provide continued assistance.
- In accordance with 24 CFR 982.638, regarding denial or termination of assistance.
- In accordance with the HRA's policy regarding number of moves within a 12-month period.

The HRA must deny the family permission to move to a new unit with continued voucher rental assistance if:

- The family defaulted on an FHA-insured mortgage; and
- The family fails to demonstrate that the family has conveyed, or will convey, title to the home, as required by HUD, to HUD or HUD's designee; and the family has moved, or will move, from the home within the period established or approved by HUD.

#### **15-VII.N. DENIAL OR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.638]**

At any time, the HRA may deny or terminate homeownership assistance in accordance with HCV program requirements in 24 CFR 982.552 (Grounds for denial or termination of assistance) or 24 CFR 982.553 (Crime by family members).

The HRA may also deny or terminate assistance for violation of participant obligations described in 24 CFR Parts 982.551 or 982.633 and in accordance with its own policy, with the exception of failure to meet obligations under the Family Self-Sufficiency program as prohibited under the alternative requirements set forth in FR Notice 12/29/14.

The HRA must terminate voucher homeownership assistance for any member of family receiving homeownership assistance that is dispossessed from the home pursuant to a judgment or order of foreclosure on any mortgage (whether FHA insured or non-FHA) securing debt incurred to purchase the home, or any refinancing of such debt.

## Chapter 16

### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses administrative policies and practices that are relevant to the activities covered in this plan. The policies are discussed in seven parts as described below:

Part I: Administrative Fee Reserve. This part describes the HRA's policies with regard to oversight of expenditures from its administrative fee reserve.

Part II: Setting Program Standards and Schedules. This part describes what payment standards are, and how they are updated, as well as how utility allowances are established and revised.

Part III: Informal Reviews and Hearings. This part outlines the requirements and procedures for informal reviews and hearings, and for informal hearings regarding citizenship status.

Part IV: Owner or Family Debts to the HRA. This part describes policies for recovery of monies that the HRA has overpaid on behalf of families, or to owners, and describes the circumstances under which the HRA will offer repayment agreements to owners and families. Also discussed are the consequences for failure to make payments in accordance with a repayment agreement.

Part V: Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP). This part describes what the SEMAP scores represent, how they are established, and how those scores affect a HRA.

Part VI: 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 HRA will follow.

Part VII: Reporting and Record Keeping for Children with Elevated Blood Lead Level. This part describes the HRA's responsibilities for reporting, data collection, and record keeping relative to children with elevated blood lead levels that are less than six years of age, and are receiving HCV assistance.

Part VIII: Determination of Insufficient Funding. This part describes the HRA's policies for determining if there is sufficient funding to issue vouchers, to approve moves to higher cost units or areas, and to continue assistance for all participant families.

Part IX: Violence against Women Act (VAWA): Notification, Documentation, Confidentiality. This part contains key terms used in VAWA and describes requirements related to notifying families and owners 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: ADMINISTRATIVE FEE RESERVE [24 CFR 982.155]**

The HRA will maintain administrative fee reserves, or unrestricted net position (UNP) for the program to pay program administrative expenses in excess of administrative fees paid by HUD for a HRA fiscal year. HUD appropriations acts beginning with FFY 2004 have specified that administrative fee funding may be used only for activities related to the provision of HCV assistance, including related development activities. Notice PIH 2012-9 cites two examples of related development activities: unit modification for accessibility purposes and development of project-based voucher units. The notice makes clear that other activities may also qualify as related development activities. Administrative fees that remain in the UNP account from funding provided prior to 2004 may be used for “other housing purposes permitted by state and local law,” in accordance with 24 CFR 982.155(b)(1).

If an HRA has not adequately administered its HCV program, HUD may prohibit use of funds in the UNP Account and may direct the HRA to use funds in that account to improve administration of the program, for HCV HAP expenses, or to reimburse ineligible expenses in accordance with the regulation at 24 CFR 982.155(b)(3).

HUD requires the HRA Board of Commissioners or other authorized officials to establish the maximum amount that may be charged against the UNP account without specific approval.

### HRA Policy

Expenditures from the UNP account will be made in accordance with all applicable federal requirements. Expenditures will not exceed \$25,000 per occurrence without the prior approval of the HRA’s Board of Commissioners.





## **PART II: SETTING PROGRAM STANDARDS AND SCHEDULES**

### **16-II.A. OVERVIEW**

Although many of the program's requirements are established centrally by HUD, the HCV program's regulations recognize that some flexibility is required to allow the HRA to adapt the program to local conditions. This part discusses how the HRA establishes and updates certain schedules and standards that are used to administer the program locally. Details about how these schedules are applied to individual families are provided in other chapters. The schedules and standards discussed here include:

- *Payment Standards*, which dictate the maximum subsidy a family can receive (application of the payment standards is discussed in Chapter 6); and
- *Utility Allowances*, which specify how a family's payment should be adjusted to account for tenant-paid utilities (application of utility allowances is discussed in Chapter 6).

#### HRA Policy

Copies of the payment standard and utility allowance schedules are available for review in the HRA's offices during normal business hours and on the HRA's website.

Families, owners, and members of the public may submit written comments on the schedules discussed in this part, at any time, for consideration during the next revision cycle.

The HRA will maintain documentation to support its annual review of payment standards and utility allowance schedules. This documentation will be retained for at least 3 years.

Establishing and updating the HRA passbook rate, which is used to calculate imputed income from assets, is covered in Chapter 6 (see Section 6-I.G.).

### **16-II.B. PAYMENT STANDARDS [24 CFR 982.503; HCV GB, Chapter 7]**

The payment standard sets the maximum subsidy payment a family can receive from the HRA each month [24 CFR 982.505(a)]. Payment standards are based on fair market rents (FMRs) published annually by HUD. FMRs are set at a percentile within the rent distribution of standard quality rental housing units in each FMR area. For most jurisdictions FMRs are set at the 40th percentile of rents in the market area.

The HRA must establish a payment standard schedule that establishes payment standard amounts for each FMR area within the HRA's jurisdiction, and for each unit size within each of the FMR areas. For each unit size, the HRA may establish a single payment standard amount for the whole FMR area, or may set different payment standards for different parts of the FMR area. Unless HUD grants an exception, the HRA is required to establish a payment standard within a "basic range" established by HUD – between 90 and 110 percent of the published FMR for each unit size.

## Updating Payment Standards

When HUD updates its FMRs, the HRA must update its payment standards if the standards are no longer within the basic range [24 CFR 982.503(b)]. HUD may require the HRA to make further adjustments if it determines that rent burdens for assisted families in the HRA's jurisdiction are unacceptably high [24 CFR 982.503(g)].

### HRA Policy

The HRA will review the appropriateness of the payment standards on an annual basis when the new FMR is published, and at other times as determined necessary. In addition to ensuring the payment standards are always within the "basic range" the HRA will consider the following factors when determining whether an adjustment should be made to the payment standard schedule:

**Funding Availability:** The HRA will review the budget to determine the impact projected subsidy adjustments will have on funding available for the program and the number of families served. The HRA will compare the number of families who could be served under revised payment standard amounts with the number assisted under current payment standard amounts.

**Rent Burden of Participating Families:** Rent burden will be determined by identifying the percentage of families, for each unit size, that are paying more than 30 percent of their monthly adjusted income as the family share. When 40 percent or more of families, for any given unit size, are paying more than 30 percent of adjusted monthly income as the family share, the HRA will consider increasing the payment standard. In evaluating rent burdens, the HRA will not include families renting a larger unit than their family unit size.

**Quality of Units Selected:** The HRA may review the quality of units selected by participant families when making the determination of the percent of income families are paying for housing, to ensure that payment standard increases are only made when needed to reach the mid-range of the market.

**Changes in Rent to Owner:** The HRA may review a sample of the units to determine how often owners are increasing or decreasing rents and the average percent of increases/decreases by bedroom size.

**Unit Availability:** The HRA will review the availability of units for each unit size, particularly in areas with low concentrations of poor and minority families.

**Lease-up Time and Success Rate:** The HRA will consider the percentage of families that are unable to locate suitable housing before the voucher expires and whether families are leaving the jurisdiction to find affordable housing.

Effective dates of changes to payment standard amounts will be determined at time of update. The HRA will always ensure the payment standards will be within the basic range.

### **Exception Payment Standards [24 CFR 982.503(c)(5), Notice PIH 2018-01]**

A non-SAFMR HRA may establish an exception payment standard for a zip code area of up to and including 110 percent of the SAFMR determined by HUD for that zip code area. Regardless of the level of the exception payment standard compared to the metropolitan area FMRs (MAFMRs), the HRA must send an email to [SAFMRs@hud.gov](mailto:SAFMRs@hud.gov) to notify HUD that it has adopted an exception payment standard based on the SAFMR. A HRA that adopts an exception payment standard pursuant to this authority must apply it to the entire ZIP code area, for both its HCV, and if applicable, its PBV program. For the PBV program, this means that the rent to owner may not exceed the new exception payment standard amount, provided the rent is still reasonable. A HRA that adopts an exception payment standard area must revise its briefing materials to make families aware of the exception payment standard and the area that it covers.

### **Voluntary Use of Small Area FMRs [24 CFR 982.503, Notice PIH 2018-01]**

HRAs that administer vouchers in a metropolitan area where the adoption of SAFMRs is not required may request approval from HUD to voluntarily adopt SAFMRs. SAFMRs may be voluntarily adopted for one or more zip code areas.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will not voluntarily adopt the use of SAFMRs except to establish exception payment standards in certain zip code areas.

### **Unit-by-Unit Exceptions [24 CFR 982.503(b), 24 CFR 982.505(d), Notice PIH 2010-26]**

Unit-by-unit exceptions to the HRA's payment standards generally are not permitted. However, an exception may be made as a reasonable accommodation for a family that includes a person with disabilities. (See Chapter 2 for a discussion of reasonable accommodations.) This type of exception does not affect the HRA's payment standard schedule.

When needed as a reasonable accommodation, the HRA may make an exception to the payment standard without HUD approval if the exception amount does not exceed 120 percent of the applicable FMR for the unit size [24 CFR 982.503(b)]. The HRA may request HUD approval for an exception to the payment standard for a particular family if the required amount exceeds 120 percent of the FMR.

#### HRA Policy

A family that requires a reasonable accommodation may request a higher payment standard at the time the Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) is submitted. The family must document the need for the exception. In order to approve an exception, or request an exception from HUD, the HRA must determine that:

There is a shortage of affordable units that would be appropriate for the family;

The family's TTP would otherwise exceed 40 percent of adjusted monthly income; and

The rent for the unit is reasonable.

### **"Success Rate" Payment Standard Amounts [24 CFR 982.503(e)]**

If a substantial percentage of families have difficulty finding a suitable unit, the HRA may request a "success rate payment standard" that applies to the entire jurisdiction. If approved by HUD, a success rate payment standard allows the HRA to set its payment standards at 90-110 percent of a higher FMR (the 50<sup>th</sup>, rather than the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile FMR). To support the request, the HRA must demonstrate that during the most recent 6-month period for which information is available:

- Fewer than 75 percent of families who were issued vouchers became participants;
- The HRA had established payment standards for all unit sizes, and for the entire jurisdiction, at 110 percent of the published FMR; and
- The HRA had a policy of allowing voucher holders who made sustained efforts to locate units at least 90 days to search for a unit.

Although HUD approves the success rate payment standard for all unit sizes in the FMR area, the HRA may choose to adjust the payment standard for only some unit sizes in all, or a designated part, of the HRA's jurisdiction within the FMR area.

### **Decreases in the Payment Standard below the Basic Range [24 CFR 982.503(d)]**

The HRA must request HUD approval to establish a payment standard amount that is lower than the basic range. At HUD's sole discretion, HUD may approve establishment of a payment standard lower than the basic range. HUD will not approve a lower payment standard if the family share for more than 40 percent of program participants exceeds 30 percent of adjusted monthly income.

## **16-II.C. UTILITY ALLOWANCES [24 CFR 982.517]**

A HRA-established utility allowance schedule is used in determining family share and HRA subsidy. The HRA must maintain a utility allowance schedule for (1) all tenant-paid utilities, (2) the cost of tenant-supplied refrigerators and ranges, and (3) other tenant-paid housing services such as trash collection.

The utility allowance schedule must be determined based on the typical cost of utilities and services paid by energy-conservative households that occupy housing of similar size and type in the same locality. In developing the schedule, the HRA must use normal patterns of consumption for the community as a whole, and current utility rates.

The utility allowance must include the utilities and services that are necessary in the locality to provide housing that complies with housing quality standards. Costs for telephone, cable/satellite television, and internet services are not included in the utility allowance schedule.

In the utility allowance schedule, the HRA must classify utilities and other housing services according to the following general categories: space heating; air conditioning; cooking; water heating; water; sewer; trash collection; other electric; cost of tenant-supplied refrigerator; cost of tenant-supplied range; and other specified housing services.

The cost of each utility and housing service must be stated separately by unit size and type. Chapter 18 of the *HCV Guidebook* provides detailed guidance to the HRA about establishing utility allowance schedules.

### **Air Conditioning**

An allowance for air-conditioning must be provided when the majority of housing units in the market have central air-conditioning or are wired for tenant-installed air conditioners.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA has included an allowance for air-conditioning in its schedule. Central air-conditioning or a portable air conditioner must be present in a unit before the HRA will apply this allowance to a family's rent and subsidy calculations.

### **Reasonable Accommodation**

HCV program regulations require a HRA to approve a utility allowance amount higher than shown on the HRA's schedule if a higher allowance is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a family member with a disability. For example, if a family member with a disability requires such an accommodation, the HRA will approve an allowance for air-conditioning, even if the HRA has determined that an allowance for air-conditioning generally is not needed (See Chapter 2 for policies regarding the request and approval of reasonable accommodations).

### **Utility Allowance Revisions**

The HRA must review its schedule of utility allowances each year, and must revise the schedule if there has been a change of 10 percent or more in any utility rate since the last time the allowance for that utility was revised.

The HRA must maintain information supporting its annual review of utility allowance and any revisions made in its utility allowance schedule.



## **PART III: INFORMAL REVIEWS AND HEARINGS**

### **16-III.A. OVERVIEW**

Both applicants and participants have the right to disagree with, and appeal, certain decisions of the HRA that may adversely affect them. HRA decisions that may be appealed by applicants and participants are discussed in this section.

The process for applicant appeals of HRA decisions is called the “informal review.” For participants (or applicants denied admission because of citizenship issues), the appeal process is called an “informal hearing.” HRAs are required to include informal review procedures for applicants and informal hearing procedures for participants in their administrative plans [24 CFR 982.54(d)(12) and (13)].

### **16-III.B. INFORMAL REVIEWS**

Informal reviews are provided for program applicants. An applicant is someone who has applied for admission to the program, but is not yet a participant in the program. Informal reviews are intended to provide a “minimum hearing requirement” [24 CFR 982.554], and need not be as elaborate as the informal hearing requirements [*Federal Register* 60, no. 127 (3 July 1995): 34690].

#### **Decisions Subject to Informal Review [24 CFR 982.554(a) and (c)]**

The HRA must give an applicant the opportunity for an informal review of a decision denying assistance [24 CFR 982.554(a)]. Denial of assistance may include any or all of the following [24 CFR 982.552(a)(2)]:

- Denying listing on the HRA waiting list
- Denying or withdrawing a voucher
- Refusing to enter into a HAP contract or approve a lease
- Refusing to process or provide assistance under portability procedures

Informal reviews are *not* required for the following reasons [24 CFR 982.554(c)]:

- Discretionary administrative determinations by the HRA
- General policy issues or class grievances
- A determination of the family unit size under the HRA subsidy standards
- An HRA determination not to approve an extension of a voucher term
- An HRA determination not to grant approval of the tenancy
- An HRA determination that the unit is not in compliance with the HQS
- An HRA determination that the unit is not in accordance with the HQS due to family size or composition

### HRA Policy

The HRA will only offer an informal review to applicants for whom assistance is being denied. Denial of assistance includes: denying listing on the HRA waiting list; denying or withdrawing a voucher.

### **Notice to the Applicant [24 CFR 982.554(a)]**

The HRA must give an applicant prompt notice of a decision denying assistance. The notice must contain a brief statement of the reasons for the HRA decision, and must also state that the applicant may request an informal review of the decision. The notice must describe how to obtain the informal review.

### **Scheduling an Informal Review**

#### HRA Policy

A request for an informal review must be made in writing and delivered to the HRA either in person or by first class mail, by 4:00 p.m., no later than 10 business days from the date of the HRA's denial of assistance.

The HRA must schedule and send written notice of the informal review within 10 business days of the family's request.

If the informal review will be conducted remotely, at the time the HRA notifies the family of the informal review, the family will be informed:

Regarding the processes to conduct a remote informal review;

That, if needed, the HRA will provide technical assistance prior to and during the informal review; and

That if the family or any individual witness has any technological, resource, or accessibility barriers preventing them from fully accessing the remote informal review, the family may inform the HRA and the HRA will assist the family in either resolving the issues or allow the family to participate in an in-person informal review, as appropriate.

### **Informal Review Procedures [24 CFR 982.554(b)]**

The informal review must 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 must be provided an opportunity to present written or oral objections to the decision of the HRA.



## **Remote Informal Reviews [Notice PIH 2020-32]**

There is no requirement that informal reviews be conducted in-person and, as such, HUD allows HRAs to conduct all or a portion of their informal review remotely either over the phone, via video conferencing, or through other virtual platforms. If the HRA chooses to conduct remote informal reviews, applicants may still request an in-person informal review, as applicable.

### **HRA Policy**

The HRA has the sole discretion to require that informal reviews 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 HRA will conduct an informal review 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 review, or if the applicant believes an in-person informal review would create an undue health risk. The HRA will consider other reasonable requests for a remote informal review on a case-by-case basis.

## **Ensuring Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities and LEP Individuals**

As with in-person informal reviews, the platform for conducting remote informal reviews must be accessible to persons with disabilities and the informal review 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. HRAs may never request or require that individuals with disabilities provide their own auxiliary aids or services, including for remote informal hearings.

HRAs are required to make reasonable accommodations in policies, practices, and procedures to ensure persons with disabilities have a full and equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from all aspects of the informal review process. See Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of reasonable accommodation requirements.

If no method of conducting a remote informal review is available that appropriately accommodates an individual's disability, the HRA may not hold against the individual his or her inability to participate in the remote informal review, and the HRA should consider whether postponing the remote informal review 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 informal reviews, 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 reviews.

## **Conducting Remote Informal Reviews**

The HRA must ensure that the lack of technology or inability to use technology for remote informal reviews does not pose a disadvantage to families that may not be apparent to the HRA. The HRA should determine through a survey or other means if these barriers exist prior to conducting the remote informal review and, if the family does not have the proper technology to fully participate, either postpone the informal review or provide an alternative means of access.

As with in-person informal reviews, the HRA must provide all materials presented, whether paper or electronic, to the family prior to the remote informal review. The family must also be provided with an accessible means by which to transmit their own evidence.

The HRA must ensure that the applicant has the right to hear and be heard. All HRA policies and processes for remote informal reviews must be conducted in accordance with due process requirements and be in compliance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 982.554 and guidance specified in Notice PIH 2020-32.

### HRA Policy

The HRA will conduct remote informal reviews 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 review 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 review 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 review, the HRA will provide the family with login information and/or conferencing call-in information and an electronic and/or physical 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 HRA of any known barriers. The HRA 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 review is to be conducted remotely, the HRA will require the family to provide any documents directly relevant to the informal review at least 24 hours before the scheduled review through the mail, via email, or text. The HRA will scan and email copies of these documents to the HRA representative the same day.

Documents will be shared electronically whenever possible.

The HRA 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 review to ensure that the applicant received all information and is comfortable accessing the video conferencing or call-in platform.

The HRA will ensure that all electronic information stored or transmitted with respect to the informal review is secure, including protecting personally identifiable information (PII), and meets the requirements for accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with LEP.

## **Informal Review Decision [24 CFR 982.554(b)]**

The HRA must notify the applicant of the HRA's final decision, including a brief statement of the reasons for the final decision.

### HRA Policy

In rendering a decision, the HRA will evaluate the following matters:

Whether or not the grounds for denial were stated factually in the notice to the family.

The validity of the grounds for denial of assistance. If the grounds for denial are not specified in the regulations, then the decision to deny assistance will be overturned.

The validity of the evidence. The HRA will evaluate whether the facts presented prove the grounds for denial of assistance. If the facts prove that there are grounds for denial, and the denial is required by HUD, the HRA will uphold the decision to deny assistance.

If the facts prove the grounds for denial, and the denial is discretionary, the HRA will consider the recommendation of the person conducting the informal review in making the final decision whether to deny assistance.

The HRA will notify the applicant of the final decision, including a statement explaining the reason(s) for the decision. The notice will be mailed within 10 business days of the informal review, to the applicant and his or her representative, if any, along with proof of mailing.

If the decision to deny is overturned as a result of the informal review, processing for admission will resume.

If the family fails to appear for their informal review, the denial of admission will stand and the family will be so notified.

### **16-III.C. INFORMAL HEARINGS FOR PARTICIPANTS [24 CFR 982.555]**

HRAs must offer an informal hearing for certain HRA determinations relating to the individual circumstances of a participant family. A participant is defined as a family that has been admitted to the HRA's HCV program and is currently assisted in the program. The purpose of the informal hearing is to consider whether the HRA's decisions related to the family's circumstances are in accordance with the law, HUD regulations and HRA policies.

The HRA is not permitted to terminate a family's assistance until the time allowed for the family to request an informal hearing has elapsed, and any requested hearing has been completed.

Termination of assistance for a participant may include any or all of the following:

- Refusing to enter into a HAP contract or approve a lease
- Terminating housing assistance payments under an outstanding HAP contract
- Refusing to process or provide assistance under portability procedures

#### **Decisions Subject to Informal Hearing**

Circumstances for which the HRA must give a participant family an opportunity for an informal hearing are as follows:

- A determination of the family's annual or adjusted income, and the use of such income to compute the housing assistance payment
- A determination of the appropriate utility allowance (if any) for tenant-paid utilities from the HRA utility allowance schedule
- A determination of the family unit size under the HRA's subsidy standards
- A determination to terminate assistance for a participant family because of the family's actions or failure to act
- A determination to terminate assistance because the participant has been absent from the assisted unit for longer than the maximum period permitted under HRA policy and HUD rules
- A determination to terminate a family's Family Self Sufficiency contract, withhold supportive services, or propose forfeiture of the family's escrow account [24 CFR 984.303(i)]

Circumstances for which an informal hearing is not required are as follows:

- Discretionary administrative determinations by the HRA
- General policy issues or class grievances
- Establishment of the HRA schedule of utility allowances for families in the program
- An HRA determination not to approve an extension of a voucher term
- An HRA determination not to approve a unit or tenancy
- An HRA determination that a unit selected by the applicant is not in compliance with the HQS
- An HRA determination that the unit is not in accordance with HQS because of family size
- A determination by the HRA to exercise or not to exercise any right or remedy against an owner under a HAP contract

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will only offer participants the opportunity for an informal hearing when required to by the regulations, and if the HRA denies a request for a reasonable accommodation (see Chapter 2).

#### **Remote Informal Hearings [Notice PIH 2020-32]**

There is no requirement that informal hearings be conducted in-person, and as such, HUD allows HRAs 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 HRA chooses to conduct remote informal hearings, applicants may still request an in-person informal hearing, as applicable.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA 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 HRA will conduct an informal hearing remotely upon request as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability, if a participant does not have child care or transportation that would enable them to attend the informal hearing, or if the participant believes an in-person hearing would create an undue health risk. The HRA 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 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. HRAs may never request or require that individuals with disabilities provide their own auxiliary aids or services, including for remote informal hearings.

HRAs are required to make reasonable accommodations in policies, practices, and procedures to ensure persons with disabilities have a full and equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from all aspects of the informal hearing process. See Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of reasonable accommodation requirements.

If no method of conducting a remote informal hearings is available that appropriately accommodates an individual's disability, the HRA may not hold against the individual his or her inability to participate in the remote informal hearing, and the HRA 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 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 Informal Hearings Remotely**

The HRA 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 HRA. The HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA's essential responsibility is to ensure informal hearings meet the requirements of due process and comply with HUD regulations. Therefore, all HRA 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 982.555 and the guidance for conducting remote hearings specified in Notice PIH 2020-32.

### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will conduct remote informal 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 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 HRA 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 HRA of any known barriers. The HRA 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 HRA will follow up with a phone call and/or email to the family at least one business day prior to the remote informal hearing to ensure that the family received all information and is comfortable accessing the video conferencing or call-in platform.

The HRA 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 Procedures**

### ***Notice to the Family* [24 CFR 982.555(c)]**

When the HRA makes a decision that is subject to informal hearing procedures, the HRA must inform the family of its right to an informal hearing at the same time that it informs the family of the decision.

For decisions related to the family's annual or adjusted income, the determination of the appropriate utility allowance, and the determination of the family unit size, the HRA must notify the family that they may ask for an explanation of the basis of the determination, and that if they do not agree with the decision, they may request an informal hearing on the decision.

For decisions related to the termination of the family's assistance, or the denial of a family's request for an exception to the HRA's subsidy standards, the notice must contain a brief statement of the reasons for the decision, a statement that if the family does not agree with the decision, the family may request an informal hearing on the decision, and a statement of the deadline for the family to request an informal hearing.

### **HRA Policy**

In cases where the HRA makes a decision for which an informal hearing must be offered, the notice to the family will include all of the following:

- The proposed action or decision of the HRA.

- A brief statement of the reasons for the decision, including the regulatory reference.

- The date the proposed action will take place.

- A statement of the family's right to an explanation of the basis for the HRA's decision.

- A statement that if the family does not agree with the decision the family may request an informal hearing of the decision.

- A deadline for the family to request the informal hearing.

- To whom the hearing request should be addressed.

- A copy of the HRA's hearing procedures.

- That the family may request a remote informal hearing



### ***Scheduling an Informal Hearing [24 CFR 982.555(d)]***

When an informal hearing is required, the HRA must proceed with the hearing in a reasonably expeditious manner upon the request of the family.

#### **HRA Policy**

A request for an informal hearing must be made in writing and delivered to the HRA either in person or by first class mail, by 4:00 p.m., no later than 10 business days from the date of the HRA's decision or notice to terminate assistance.

The HRA must schedule and send written notice of the informal hearing to the family within 10 business days of the family's request.

If the HRA 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 informal hearing;

That the HRA will provide technical assistance prior to and during the informal hearing, if needed; and

That if the family or any individual witness has any technological, resource, or accessibility barriers, the family may inform the HRA and the HRA will assist the family in either resolving the issue or allow the family to participate in an in-person hearing, as appropriate.

The family 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 HRA may request documentation of the "good cause" prior to rescheduling the hearing.

If the family does not appear within 20 minutes of the scheduled time, and was unable to reschedule the hearing in advance due to the nature of the conflict, the family must contact the HRA within 24 hours of the scheduled hearing date, excluding weekends and holidays. The HRA will reschedule the hearing only if the family can show good cause for the failure to appear, or if it is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities. If the family cannot show good cause for the failure to appear, or a rescheduling is not needed as a reasonable accommodation, the HRA's decision will stand.

### ***Pre-Hearing Right to Discovery [24 CFR 982.555(e)]***

Participants and the HRA are permitted pre-hearing discovery rights. The family must be given the opportunity to examine before the hearing any HRA documents that are directly relevant to the hearing. The family must be allowed to copy any such documents at their own expense. If the HRA does not make the document available for examination on request of the family, the HRA may not rely on the document at the hearing.

For the purpose of informal hearings, *documents* include records and regulations.

#### **HRA Policy**

The family will be allowed to copy any documents related to the hearing at a cost of \$.25 per page after the first 10 pages. The family must request discovery of HRA documents no later than 12:00 p.m. on the business day prior to the scheduled hearing date.

The HRA will compile a hearing packet, consisting of all documents the HRA intends to produce at the informal hearing. The HRA will mail copies of the hearing packet to the family, the family's representatives, if any, and the hearing officer at least three days before the scheduled remote informal hearing. The original hearing packet will be in the possession of the HRA representative and retained by the HRA.

Documents will be shared electronically whenever possible.

The HRA hearing procedures may provide that the HRA must be given the opportunity to examine at the HRA offices before the hearing any family documents that are directly relevant to the hearing. The HRA must be allowed to copy any such document at the HRA's expense. If the family does not make the document available for examination on request of the HRA, the family may not rely on the document at the hearing.

#### **HRA Policy**

For in-person hearings, the HRA will not require pre-hearing discovery by the HRA of family documents directly relevant to the hearing.

If the informal hearing is to be conducted remotely, the HRA 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 HRA will scan and email copies of these documents to the hearing officer and the HRA representative the same day.

Documents will be shared electronically whenever possible.

### ***Participant's Right to Bring Counsel [24 CFR 982.555(e)(3)]***

At its own expense, the family may be represented by a lawyer or other representative at the informal hearing.

### ***Informal Hearing Officer [24 CFR 982.555(e)(4)]***

Informal hearings will be conducted by a person or persons approved by the HRA, other than the person who made or approved the decision or a subordinate of the person who made or approved the decision.

### ***Attendance at the Informal Hearing***

#### **HRA Policy**

Hearings must be attended by a hearing officer and the following applicable persons:

An HRA representative(s) and any witnesses for the HRA

The participant and other adults in the household and any witnesses for the participant

Hearings may be attended by the following applicable persons:

The participant's counsel or other representative

The HRA's counsel or other representative

Any other person approved by the HRA as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability

Minor children are not allowed to attend hearings.

### ***Conduct at Hearings***

The person who conducts the hearing may regulate the conduct of the hearing in accordance with the HRA's hearing procedures [24 CFR 982.555(4)(ii)].

#### **HRA Policy**

The hearing officer is responsible to manage the order of business and to ensure that hearings are conducted in a professional and businesslike manner. Attendees are expected to comply with all hearing procedures established by the hearing officer and guidelines for conduct. Any person demonstrating disruptive, abusive or otherwise inappropriate behavior will be excused from the hearing at the discretion of the hearing officer.

### ***Evidence [24 CFR 982.555(e)(5)]***

The HRA and the family must be given the opportunity to present evidence and question any witnesses. In general, all evidence is admissible at an informal hearing. Evidence may be considered without regard to admissibility under the rules of evidence applicable to judicial proceedings.

#### **HRA 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 HRA. Writings include all forms of recorded communication or representation, including letters, 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 either the HRA (or the family, if required in a remote hearing) fail to comply with the discovery requirements described above, the hearing officer will refuse to admit such evidence.

Other than the failure of a party to comply with discovery, the hearing officer has the authority to overrule any objections to evidence.

### ***Procedures for Rehearing or Further Hearing***

#### **HRA 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 HRA will take effect and another hearing will not be granted.

In addition, within 10 business days after the date the hearing officer's report is mailed to the HRA and the participant, the HRA or the participant may request a rehearing or a further hearing. Such request must be made in writing and postmarked or hand-delivered to the hearing officer and to the other party within the 10-business-day period. The

request must demonstrate cause, supported by specific references to the hearing officer's report, as to why the request should be granted.

A rehearing or a further hearing may be requested for the purpose of rectifying any obvious mistake of law made during the hearing or any obvious injustice not known at the time of the hearing.

It shall be within the sole discretion of the HRA to grant or deny the request for further hearing or rehearing. A further hearing may be limited to written submissions by the parties, in the manner specified by the hearing officer.

### ***Hearing Officer's Decision [24 CFR 982.555(e)(6)]***

The person who conducts the hearing must issue a written decision, stating briefly the reasons for the decision. Factual determinations relating to the individual circumstances of the family must be based on a preponderance of evidence presented at the hearing.

#### **HRA Policy**

In rendering a decision, the hearing officer will consider the following matters:

**HRA Notice to the Family:** The hearing officer will determine if the reasons for the HRA's decision are factually stated in the Notice.

**Discovery:** The hearing officer will determine if the HRA and the family were given the opportunity to examine any relevant documents in accordance with HRA policy.

**HRA Evidence to Support the HRA 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 HRA's conclusion.

**Validity of Grounds for Termination of Assistance (when applicable):** The hearing officer will determine if the termination of assistance is for one of the grounds specified in the HUD regulations and HRA policies. If the grounds for termination are not specified in the regulations or in compliance with HRA policies, then the decision of the HRA will be overturned.

The hearing officer will issue a written decision to the family and the HRA no later than 10 business days after the hearing. The report will contain the following information:

#### **Hearing information:**

Name of the participant;

Date, time and place of the hearing;

Name of the hearing officer;

Name of the HRA representative; and

Name of family representative (if any).

**Background:** A brief, impartial statement of the reason for the 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 HRA's decision.

**Order:** The hearing report will include a statement of whether the HRA's decision is upheld or overturned. If it is overturned, the hearing officer will instruct the HRA to change the decision in accordance with the hearing officer's determination. In the case of termination of assistance, the hearing officer will instruct the HRA to restore the participant's program status.

***Issuance of Decision [24 CFR 982.555(e)(6)]***

A copy of the hearing must be furnished promptly to the family.

HRA Policy

The hearing officer will mail a "Notice of Hearing Decision" to the HRA and to the participant on the same day. This notice will be sent by first-class mail. The participant will be mailed the original "Notice of Hearing Decision" and a copy of the proof of mailing. A copy of the "Notice of Hearing Decision" will be maintained in the HRA's file.

***Effect of Final Decision [24 CFR 982.555(f)]***

The HRA is not bound by the decision of the hearing officer for matters in which the HRA is not required to provide an opportunity for a hearing, decisions that exceed the authority of the hearing officer, decisions that conflict with or contradict HUD regulations, requirements, or are otherwise contrary to federal, state, or local laws.

If the HRA determines it is not bound by the hearing officer's decision in accordance with HUD regulations, the HRA must promptly notify the family of the determination and the reason for the determination.

HRA Policy

The Executive Director has the authority to determine that the HRA is not bound by the decision of the hearing officer because the HRA was not required to provide a hearing, the decision exceeded the authority of the hearing officer, the decision conflicted with or contradicted HUD regulations, requirements, or the decision was otherwise contrary to federal, state, or local laws.

In such a case, the HRA will mail a "Notice of Final Decision" to the HRA and the participant on the same day. The "Notice of Final Decision" will be sent by first-class mail. A copy of this notice will be maintained in the HRA's file.

#### **16-III.D. 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. Applicants who are denied assistance due to immigration status are entitled to an informal hearing, not an informal review.

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 HRA 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 HRA 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)]**

The notice of denial or termination of assistance for noncitizens must advise the family:

- 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 participant, 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 HRA 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.



## **USCIS Appeal Process [24 CFR 5.514(e)]**

When the HRA receives notification that the USCIS secondary verification failed to confirm eligible immigration status, the HRA 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 HRA with a copy of the written request for appeal and the proof of mailing.

### **HRA Policy**

The HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA, of its decision. When the USCIS notifies the HRA of the decision, the HRA must notify the family of its right to request an informal hearing.

### **HRA Policy**

The HRA 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, the family may request that the HRA provide a hearing. The request for a hearing must be made either within 30 days of receipt of the HRA 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 HRA 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. See Section 16-III.C. for a listing of positions that serve as informal hearing officers.

### ***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 HRA 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.

#### **HRA Policy**

The family will be allowed to copy any documents related to the hearing at a cost of \$.25 per page after the first 10 pages. The family must request discovery of HRA 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 HRA, and to confront and cross-examine all witnesses on whose testimony or information the HRA 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. Upon request, the HRA will provide competent interpretation services, free of charge.

### ***Recording of the Hearing***

The family is entitled to have the hearing recorded by audiotape. The HRA may, but is not required to provide a transcript of the hearing.

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will not provide a transcript of an audio taped hearing.

### ***Hearing Decision***

The HRA must provide the family with a written final decision, based solely on the facts presented at the hearing, within 14 calendar days of the date of the informal hearing. The decision must state the basis for the 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, the family may request that the HRA provide a hearing. The request for a hearing must be made either within 30 days of receipt of the HRA notice of termination, or within 30 days of receipt of the USCIS appeal decision.

For the informal hearing procedures that apply to participant families whose assistance is being terminated based on immigration status, see Section 16-III.C.

**Retention of Documents [24 CFR 5.514(h)]**

The HRA must retain for a minimum of 5 years the following documents that may have been submitted to the HRA by the family, or provided to the HRA as part of the USCIS appeal or the HRA 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



## **PART IV: OWNER OR FAMILY DEBTS TO THE HRA**

### **16-IV.A. OVERVIEW**

HRAs are required to include in the administrative plan, policies concerning repayment by a family of amounts owed to the HRA [24 CFR 982.54]. This part describes the HRA's policies for recovery of monies owed to the HRA by families or owners.

#### HRA Policy

When an action or inaction of an owner or participant results in the overpayment of housing assistance, the HRA holds the owner or participant liable to return any overpayments to the HRA.

The HRA will enter into repayment agreements in accordance with the policies contained in this part as a means to recover overpayments.

When an owner or participant refuses to repay monies owed to the HRA, the HRA will utilize other available collection alternatives including, but not limited to, the following:

- Collection agencies
- Small claims court
- Civil law suit
- State income tax set-off program

## **16-IV.B. REPAYMENT POLICY**

### **Owner Debts to the HRA**

#### HRA Policy

Any amount due to the HRA by an owner must be repaid by the owner within 30 days of the HRA determination of the debt.

If the owner fails to repay the debt within the required time frame and is entitled to future HAP payments, the HRA will reduce the future HAP payments by the amount owed until the debt is paid in full.

If the owner is not entitled to future HAP payments the HRA may, in its sole discretion, offer to enter into a repayment agreement on terms prescribed by the HRA.

If the owner refuses to repay the debt, does not enter into a repayment agreement, or breaches a repayment agreement, the HRA will ban the owner from future participation in the program and pursue other modes of collection.

### **Family Debts to the HRA**

#### HRA Policy

Any amount owed to the HRA by an HCV family must be repaid by the family. If the family is unable to repay the debt within 30 days, the HRA will offer to 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 HRA will terminate assistance in accordance with the policies in Chapter 12 and pursue other modes of collection.

### **Repayment Agreement [24 CFR 792.103]**

The term *repayment agreement* refers to a formal written document signed by a tenant or owner and provided to the HRA in which a tenant or owner acknowledges a debt in a specific amount and agrees to repay the amount due at specific time periods.

### **General Repayment Agreement Guidelines for Families**

#### ***Down Payment Requirement***

#### HRA Policy

Before executing a repayment agreement with a family, the HRA will generally require a down payment of 10 percent of the total amount owed.

### ***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. However, a family may already be paying 40 per cent or more of its monthly adjusted income in rent. Moreover, Notice PIH 2017-12 acknowledges that HRAs have the discretion to establish “thresholds and policies” for repayment agreements with families [24 CFR 982.552(c)(1)(vii)].

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA has established the following thresholds for repayment of debts:

Amounts between \$3,000 and the federal or state threshold for criminal prosecution must be repaid within 36 months.

Amounts between \$2,000 and \$2,999 must be repaid within 30 months.

Amounts between \$1,000 and \$1,999 must be repaid within 24 months.

Amounts under \$1,000 must be repaid within 12 months.

If a family can provide evidence satisfactory to the HRA that the threshold applicable to the family’s debt would impose an undue hardship, the HRA may, in its sole discretion, determine that a lower monthly payment amount is reasonable. In making its determination, the HRA will consider all relevant information, including the following:

The amount owed by the family to the HRA

The reason for the debt, including whether the debt was the result of family action/inaction or circumstances beyond the family’s control

The family’s current and potential income and expenses

The family’s current family share, as calculated under 24 CFR 982.515

The family’s history of meeting its financial responsibilities

### ***Execution of the Agreement***

#### **HRA Policy**

Any repayment agreement between the HRA and a family must be signed and dated by the HRA and by the head of household and spouse/cohead (if applicable).

### ***Due Dates***

#### **HRA Policy**

All payments are due by the close of business on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month. If the 25<sup>th</sup> does not fall on a business day, the due date is the close of business on the first business day after the 25<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Late or Missed Payments***

#### **HRA Policy**

If the payment is 30 days or more delinquent, it will be considered a breach of the agreement and the HRA will terminate assistance in accordance with the policies in Chapter 12.

### ***No Offer of Repayment Agreement***

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA generally will not enter into a repayment agreement with a family if there is already a repayment agreement in place with the family or if the amount owed by the family exceeds the federal or state threshold for criminal prosecution.

### **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 family briefing packet that state the family's obligation to provide true and complete information at every reexamination and the grounds on which the HRA 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 HRA the monthly payment amount specified in the agreement but must also pay to the owner the family's monthly share of the rent to owner
- 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 assistance



## **PART V: SECTION 8 MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (SEMAP)**

### **16-V.A. OVERVIEW**

The Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) is a tool that allows HUD to measure HRA performance in key areas to ensure program integrity and accountability. SEMAP scores translate into a rating for each HRA as high performing, standard, or troubled. Scores on individual SEMAP indicators, as well as overall SEMAP ratings, can affect the HRA in several ways.

- High-performing HRAs can be given a competitive advantage under notices of funding availability [24 CFR 985.103].
- HRAs with deficiencies on one or more indicators are required to correct the deficiencies and report to HUD [24 CFR 985.106].
- HRAs with an overall rating of “troubled” are subject to additional HUD oversight, including on-site reviews by HUD staff, a requirement to develop a corrective action plan, and monitoring to ensure the successful implementation of the corrective action plan. In addition, HRAs that are designated “troubled” may not use any part of the administrative fee reserve for other housing purposes [24 CFR 985.107].
- HUD may determine that a HRA's failure to correct identified SEMAP deficiencies or to prepare and implement a corrective action plan required by HUD constitutes a default under the ACC [24 CFR 985.109].

## **16-V.B. SEMAP CERTIFICATION [24 CFR 985.101]**

HRAs must submit the HUD-required SEMAP certification form within 60 calendar days after the end of its fiscal year. The certification must be approved by HRA board resolution and signed by the HRA executive director. If the HRA is a unit of local government or a state, a resolution approving the certification is not required, and the certification must be executed by the Section 8 program director.

HRAs with less than 250 voucher units are only required to be assessed every other HRA fiscal year. HUD will assess such HRAs annually if the HRA elects to have its performance assessed on an annual basis; or is designated as “troubled” [24 CFR 985.105].

Failure of a HRA to submit its SEMAP certification within the required time frame will result in an overall performance rating of “troubled.”

A HRA’s SEMAP certification is subject to HUD verification by an on-site confirmatory review at any time.

Upon receipt of the HRA’s SEMAP certification, HUD will rate the HRA’s performance under each SEMAP indicator in accordance with program requirements.

### **HUD Verification Method**

Several of the SEMAP indicators are scored based on a review of a quality control sample selected for this purpose. The HRA or the Independent Auditor must select an unbiased sample that provides an adequate representation of the types of information to be assessed, in accordance with SEMAP requirements [24 CFR 985.2].

If the HUD verification method for the indicator relies on data in the Form-50058 module (formerly known as MTCS) in the PIH Information Center (PIC), and HUD determines that those data are insufficient to verify the HRA's certification on the indicator due to the HRA's failure to adequately report family data, HUD will assign a zero rating for the indicator [24 CFR 985.3].

## 16-V.C. SEMAP INDICATORS [24 CFR 985.3 and form HUD-52648]

The table below lists each of the SEMAP indicators, contains a description of each indicator, and explains the basis for points awarded under each indicator.

A HRA that expends less than \$300,000 in Federal awards and whose Section 8 programs are not audited by an independent auditor, is not be rated under SEMAP indicators 1-7.

SEMAP Indicators
<b>Indicator 1: Selection from the waiting list</b> <b>Maximum Score: 15</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This indicator shows whether the HRA has written policies in its administrative plan for selecting applicants from the waiting list and whether the HRA follows these policies when selecting applicants for admission from the waiting list.</li><li>• Points are based on the percent of families that are selected from the waiting list in accordance with the HRA's written policies, according to the HRA's quality control sample.</li></ul>
<b>Indicator 2: Rent reasonableness</b> <b>Maximum Score: 20</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This indicator shows whether the HRA has and implements a reasonable written method to determine and document for each unit leased that the rent to owner is reasonable based on current rents for comparable unassisted units</li><li>• Points are based on the percent of units for which the HRA follows its written method to determine reasonable rent and has documented its determination that the rent to owner is reasonable, according to the HRA's quality control sample.</li></ul>
<b>Indicator 3: Determination of adjusted income</b> <b>Maximum Score: 20</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This indicator measures whether the HRA verifies and correctly determines adjusted income for each assisted family, and where applicable, uses the appropriate utility allowances for the unit leased in determining the gross rent.</li><li>• Points are based on the percent of files that are calculated and verified correctly, according to the HRA's quality control sample.</li></ul>
<b>Indicator 4: Utility allowance schedule</b> <b>Maximum Score: 5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This indicator shows whether the HRA maintains an up-to-date utility allowance schedule.</li><li>• Points are based on whether the HRA has reviewed the utility allowance schedule and adjusted it when required, according to the HRA's certification.</li></ul>

**Indicator 5: HQS quality control inspections****Maximum Score: 5**

- This indicator shows whether a HRA supervisor reinspects a sample of units under contract during the HRA fiscal year, which meets the minimum sample size requirements for quality control of HQS inspections.
- Points are based on whether the required quality control reinspections were completed, according to the HRA's certification.

**Indicator 6: HQS enforcement****Maximum Score: 10**

- This indicator shows whether, following each HQS inspection of a unit under contract where the unit fails to meet HQS, any cited life-threatening deficiencies are corrected within 24 hours from the inspection and all other deficiencies are corrected within no more than 30 calendar days from the inspection or any HRA-approved extension.
- Points are based on whether the HRA corrects all HQS deficiencies in accordance with required time frames, according to the HRA's certification.

**Indicator 7: Expanding housing opportunities****Maximum Points: 5**

- Only applies to HRAs with jurisdiction in metropolitan FMR areas.
- This indicator shows whether the HRA has adopted and implemented a written policy to encourage participation by owners of units located outside areas of poverty or minority concentration; informs voucher holders of the full range of areas where they may lease units both inside and outside the HRA's jurisdiction; and supplies a list of landlords or other parties who are willing to lease units or help families find units, including units outside areas of poverty or minority concentration.
- Points are based on whether the HRA has adopted and implemented written policies in accordance with SEMAP requirements, according to the HRA's certification.

**Indicator 8: FMR limit and payment standards****Maximum Points: 5 points**

- This indicator shows whether the HRA has adopted a payment standard schedule that establishes payment standard amounts by unit size for each FMR area in the HRA's jurisdiction, that are within the basic range of 90 to 110 percent of the published FMR.
- Points are based on whether the HRA has appropriately adopted a payment standard schedule(s), according to the HRA's certification.

**Indicator 9: Annual reexaminations****Maximum Points: 10**

- This indicator shows whether the HRA completes a reexamination for each participating family at least every 12 months.
- Points are based on the percent of reexaminations that are more than 2 months overdue, according to data from PIC.

**Indicator 10: Correct tenant rent calculations****Maximum Points: 5**

- This indicator shows whether the HRA correctly calculates the family's share of the rent to owner.
- Points are based on the percent of correct calculations of family share of the rent, according to data from PIC.

**Indicator 11: Pre-contract HQS inspections****Maximum Points: 5**

- This indicator shows whether newly leased units pass HQS inspection on or before the effective date of the assisted lease and HAP contract.
- Points are based on the percent of newly leased units that passed HQS inspection prior to the effective date of the lease and HAP contract, according to data from PIC.

**Indicator 12: Annual HQS inspections****Maximum Points: 10**

- This indicator shows whether the HRA inspects each unit under contract at least annually.
- Points are based on the percent of annual HQS inspections of units under contract that are more than 2 months overdue, according to data from PIC.

**Indicator 13: Lease-up****Maximum Points: 20 points**

- This indicator shows whether the HRA enters HAP contracts for at least 98 percent of the number of the HRA's baseline voucher units in the ACC for the calendar year ending on or before the HRA's fiscal year, or whether the HRA has expended at least 98 percent of its allocated budget authority for the same calendar year. The HRA can receive 15 points if 95 to 97 percent of vouchers are leased or budget authority is utilized.
- Points are based on utilization of vouchers and HAP expenditures as reported in the voucher management system (VMS) for the most recently completed calendar year.

**Indicator 14: Family self-sufficiency (FSS) enrollment and escrow account balances****Maximum Points: 10**

- Only applies to HRAs with mandatory FSS programs.
- This indicator shows whether the HRA has enrolled families in the FSS program as required, and measures the percent of current FSS participants that have had increases in earned income which resulted in escrow account balances.
- Points are based on the percent of mandatory FSS slots that are filled and the percent of families with escrow account balances, according to data from PIC.

**Success Rate of Voucher Holders****Maximum Points: 5**

- Only applies to HRAs that have received approval to establish success rate payment standard amounts, and isn't effective until the second full HRA fiscal year following the date of HUD approval of success rate payment standard amounts.
- This indicator shows whether voucher holders were successful in leasing units with voucher assistance.
- Points are based on the percent of families that were issued vouchers, and that became participants in the voucher program.

**Deconcentration Bonus Indicator****Maximum Points: 5**

- Submission of data for this indicator is mandatory for a HRA using one or more payment standard amount(s) that exceed(s) 100 percent of the published FMR set at the 50 percentile rent, starting with the second full HRA fiscal year following initial use of payment standard amounts based on the FMRs set at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile.
- Additional points are available to HRAs that have jurisdiction in metropolitan FMR areas and that choose to submit the required data.
- Points are based on whether the data that is submitted meets the requirements for bonus points.

## **PART VI: RECORD KEEPING**

### **16-VI.A. OVERVIEW**

The HRA 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 HRA must ensure that all applicant and participant files are maintained in a way that protects an individual's privacy rights.

### **16-VI.B. RECORD RETENTION [24 CFR 982.158]**

During the term of each assisted lease, and for at least three years thereafter, the HRA must keep:

- A copy of the executed lease;
- The HAP contract; and
- The application from the family.

In addition, the HRA must keep the following records for at least three years:

- Records that provide income, racial, ethnic, gender, and disability status data on program applicants and participants;
- An application from each ineligible family and notice that the applicant is not eligible;
- HUD-required reports;
- Unit inspection reports;
- Lead-based paint records as required by 24 CFR 35, Subpart B.
- Accounts and other records supporting HRA budget and financial statements for the program;
- Records to document the basis for HRA determination that rent to owner is a reasonable rent (initially and during the term of a HAP contract); and
- Other records specified by HUD.

Notice PIH 2014-20 requires HRAs 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 HRA must keep confidential records of all emergency transfer requested by victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking under the HRA's Emergency Transfer Plan, as well as the outcomes of such requests, and retain the records for a period of three years [24 CFR 5.2002(e)(12)].

If an informal hearing to establish a family's citizenship status is held, longer retention requirements apply for some types of documents. For specific requirements, see Section 16-III.D., Retention of Documents.

## **16-VI.C. RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

HRAs must maintain applicant and participant files and information in accordance with the regulatory requirements described below.

### **HRA Policy**

All applicant and participant information will be kept in a secure location and access will be limited to authorized HRA staff.

HRA 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 HRA may release the information collected.

### **Upfront Income Verification (UIV) Records**

HRAs 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 data*.

### **HRA Policy**

Prior to utilizing HUD's EIV system, the HRA will adopt and implement EIV security procedures required by HUD.



## **Criminal Records**

The HRA may only disclose the criminal conviction records which the HRA receives from a law enforcement agency to officers or employees of the HRA, or to authorized representatives of the HRA who have a job-related need to have access to the information [24 CFR 5.903(e)].

The HRA must establish and implement a system of records management that ensures that any criminal record received by the HRA 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 HRA action without institution of a challenge or final disposition of any such litigation [24 CFR 5.903(g)].

The HRA must establish and implement a system of records management that ensures that any sex offender registration information received by the HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA other than under 24 CFR 5.905.

## **Medical/Disability Records**

HRAs are not permitted to inquire about the nature or extent of a person's disability. The HRA may not inquire about a person's diagnosis or details of treatment for a disability or medical condition. If the HRA receives a verification document that provides such information, the HRA should not place this information in the tenant file. The HRA should destroy the document.

## **Documentation of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking**

For requirements and HRA policies related to management of documentation obtained from victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, see section 16-IX.E.



## **PART VII: REPORTING AND RECORD KEEPING FOR CHILDREN WITH ELEVATED BLOOD LEAD LEVEL**

### **16-VII.A. OVERVIEW**

The HRA has certain responsibilities relative to children with elevated blood lead levels that are receiving HCV assistance. The notification, verification, and hazard reduction requirements are discussed in Chapter 8. This part deals with the reporting requirements, and data collection and record keeping responsibilities that the HRA is subject to.

### **16-VII.B. REPORTING REQUIREMENT [24 CFR 35.1225(e); Notice PIH 2017-13]**

The owner must report the name and address of a child identified as having an elevated blood lead level to the public health department within five business days of being so notified by any other medical health care professional. The owner must also notify the HUD field office and the HUD Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes (OLHCHH) of the child's address within five business days. The HRA may collaborate with the owner on the notification process, such as by agreeing with the owner to provide the required notifications on the owner's behalf.

#### HRA Policy

Upon notification by the owner, the HRA will provide the public health department written notice of the name and address of any child identified as having an elevated blood lead level within five business days.

Upon notification by the owner, the HRA will notify the HUD field office and the HUD Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes (OLHCHH) of the child's address within five business days.

### **16-VII.C. DATA COLLECTION AND RECORD KEEPING [24 CFR 35.1225(f)]**

At least quarterly, the HRA must attempt to obtain from the public health department(s) with a similar area of jurisdiction, the names and/or addresses of children less than 6 years old with an elevated blood lead level.

If the HRA obtains names and addresses of elevated blood lead level children from the public health department(s), the HRA must match this information with the names and addresses of families receiving HCV assistance, unless the public health department performs such a procedure. If a match occurs, the HRA must carry out the notification, verification, and hazard reduction requirements discussed in Chapter 8, and the reporting requirement discussed above.

At least quarterly, the HRA must also report an updated list of the addresses of units receiving assistance under the HCV program to the same public health department(s), unless the public health department(s) states that it does not wish to receive such a report.

#### HRA Policy

The public health department(s) has stated they **do not** wish to receive a report of an updated list of the addresses of units receiving assistance under the HCV program, on a quarterly basis. Therefore, the HRA is not providing such a report.



## **PART VIII: DETERMINATION OF INSUFFICIENT FUNDING**

### **16-VIII.A. OVERVIEW**

The HCV regulations allow HRAs to deny families permission to move and to terminate Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contracts if funding under the consolidated ACC is insufficient to support continued assistance [24 CFR 982.354(e)(1) and 982.454]. If a HRA denies a family a portability move based on insufficient funding, the HRA is required to notify the local HUD office within 10 business days [24 CFR 982.354]. Insufficient funding may also impact the HRA's ability to issue vouchers to families on the waiting list. This part discusses the methodology the HRA will use to determine whether or not the HRA has sufficient funding to issue vouchers, approve moves, and to continue subsidizing all families currently under a HAP contract.

### **16-VIII.B. METHODOLOGY**

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will determine whether there is adequate funding to issue vouchers, approve moves to higher cost units and areas, and continue subsidizing all current participants by comparing the HRA's annual budget authority to the annual total HAP needs on a monthly basis. The total HAP needs for the calendar year will be projected by establishing the actual HAP costs year to date. To that figure, the HRA will add anticipated HAP expenditures for the remainder of the calendar year. Projected HAP expenditures will be calculated by multiplying the projected number of units leased per remaining months by the most current month's average HAP. The projected number of units leased per month will take into account the average monthly turnover of participant families. If the total annual HAP needs equal or exceed the annual budget authority, or if the HRA cannot support the cost of the proposed subsidy commitment (voucher issuance or move) based on the funding analysis, the HRA will be considered to have insufficient funding.



## **PART IX: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA): NOTIFICATION, DOCUMENTATION, CONFIDENTIALITY**

### **16-IX.A. OVERVIEW**

The Violence against Women 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 housing choice voucher (HCV) program. If your state or local laws provide greater protection for such victims, those laws apply in conjunction with VAWA.

In addition to definitions of key terms used in VAWA, this part contains general VAWA requirements and HRA policies in three areas: notification, documentation, and confidentiality. Specific VAWA requirements and HRA policies are located primarily in the following sections: 3-I.C, “Family Breakup and Remaining Member of Tenant Family”; 3-III.G, “Prohibition against Denial of Assistance to Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking”; 10-I.A, “Allowable Moves”; 10-I.B, “Restrictions on Moves”; 12-II.E, “Terminations Related to Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking”; and 12-II.F, “Termination Notice.”

### **16-IX.B. DEFINITIONS [24 CFR 5.2003, 42 USC 13925]**

As used in VAWA:

- 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 *affiliated individual* means, with respect to a person:
  - A spouse, parent, brother or sister, or child of that individual, or an individual to whom that individual stands in the position or place of a parent; or
  - Any other individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in the household of the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
- The term *sexual assault* means:
  - Any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by federal, tribal, or state law, including when the victim lacks the 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-IX.C. NOTIFICATION [24 CFR 5.2005(a), 42 USC 13925]**

### **Notification to Public**

The HRA adopts the following policy to help ensure that all actual and potential beneficiaries of its HCV program are aware of their rights under VAWA.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will post the following information regarding VAWA in its offices and on its website. It will also make the information readily available to anyone who requests it.

A copy of the notice of occupancy rights under VAWA to housing choice voucher 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 HRA's emergency transfer 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 Exhibits 16-1 and 16-2)

Contact information for local victim advocacy groups or service providers

## **Notification to Program Applicants and Participants [24 CFR 5.2005(a)(1)]**

HRAs are required to inform program applicants and participants 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.

### HRA Policy

The HRA will provide all applicants with information about VAWA at the time they request an application for housing assistance, as part of the written briefing packet, and at the time the family is admitted to the program. The HRA will also include information about VAWA in all notices of denial of assistance (see section 3-III.G).

The HRA will provide all participants with information about VAWA at the time of admission (see section 5-I.B) and at annual reexamination. The HRA will also include information about VAWA in notices of termination of assistance, as provided in section 12-II.F.

The VAWA information provided to applicants and participants will consist of the notices in Exhibits 16-1 and 16-2.

The HRA is not limited to providing VAWA information at the times specified in the above policy. If the HRA decides to provide VAWA information to a participant following an incident of domestic violence, Notice PIH 2017-08 cautions against sending the information by mail, since the abuser may be monitoring the mail. The notice recommends that in such cases the HRA make alternative delivery arrangements that will not put the victim at risk.

### HRA Policy

Whenever the HRA has reason to suspect that providing information about VAWA to a participant 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 HRA may decide not to send mail regarding VAWA protections to the victim's unit if the HRA believes the perpetrator may have access to the victim's mail, unless requested by the victim.

When discussing VAWA with the victim, the HRA will take reasonable precautions to ensure that no one can overhear the conversation, such as having conversations 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.

## **Notification to Owners and Managers**

While HRAs are no longer required by regulation to notify owners and managers participating in the HCV program of their rights and obligations under VAWA, the HRA may still choose to inform them.

### HRA Policy

The HRA will provide owners and managers with information about their rights and obligations under VAWA when they begin their participation in the program and at least annually thereafter.

The VAWA information provided to owners will consist of the notice in Exhibit 16-5 and a copy of form HUD-5382, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking and Alternate Documentation.

## **16-IX.D. DOCUMENTATION [24 CFR 5.2007]**

A HRA presented with a claim for initial or continued assistance based on status as a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, 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 HRA may extend this time period at its discretion. [24 CFR 5.2007(a)]

The individual may satisfy the HRA'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 HRA 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 final rule].

### HRA 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.

The HRA may, in its discretion, extend the deadline for 10 business days. In determining whether to extend the deadline, the HRA will consider factors that may contribute to the victim's inability to provide documentation in a timely manner, including cognitive limitations, disabilities, limited English proficiency, absence from the unit, administrative delays, the danger of further violence, and the victim's need to address health or safety issues. Any extension granted by the HRA will be in writing.

Once the victim provides documentation, the HRA will acknowledge receipt of the documentation within 10 business days.

### **Conflicting Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(e)]**

In cases where the HRA 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 HRA may determine which is the true victim by requiring each to provide acceptable third-party documentation, as described above (forms 2 and 3). The HRA may also request third-party documentation when submitted documentation contains information that conflicts with existing information already available to the HRA. Individuals have 30 calendar days to return third-party verification to the HRA. If the HRA does not receive third-party documentation, and the HRA will deny or terminate assistance as a result, the HRA must hold separate hearings for the tenants [Notice PIH 2017-08].

The HRA must honor any court orders issued to protect the victim or to address the distribution of property.

#### HRA Policy

If presented with conflicting certification documents from members of the same household, the HRA 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(e) and by following any HUD guidance on how such determinations should be made.

When requesting third-party documents, the HRA will provide contact information for local domestic violence and legal aid offices. In such cases, applicants or tenants will be given 30 calendar days from the date of the request to provide such documentation.

If the HRA does not receive third-party documentation within the required timeframe (and any extensions) the HRA 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 HRA will hold separate hearings for the applicants or tenants.

### **Discretion to Require No Formal Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(d)]**

The HRA 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.

#### HRA Policy

If the HRA accepts an individual's statement or other corroborating evidence (as determined by the victim) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, the HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA may allow, the HRA may deny relief for protection under VAWA.

### **16-IX.E. CONFIDENTIALITY [24 CFR 5.2007(b)(4)]**

All information provided to the HRA regarding domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, including the fact that an individual is a victim of such violence or stalking, must be retained in confidence. This means that the HRA (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.

#### HRA Policy

If disclosure is required for use in an eviction proceeding or is otherwise required by applicable law, the HRA will inform the victim before disclosure occurs so that safety risks can be identified and addressed.

<b>EXHIBIT 16-1: SAMPLE NOTICE OF OCCUPANCY RIGHTS UNDER THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT, FORM HUD-5380</b>
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**St. Cloud HRA**

**Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence Against Women Act<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 housing choice voucher 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 the housing choice voucher program, 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**

If you are receiving assistance under the housing choice voucher 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 housing choice voucher 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.

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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.

## **Removing the Abuser or Perpetrator from the Household**

The HRA 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 HRA chooses to remove the abuser or perpetrator, the HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA must follow federal, state, and local eviction procedures. In order to divide a lease, the HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA 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 housing provider 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 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, as described in the documentation section below.

- 2. You expressly request the emergency transfer.** Your housing provider 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 HRA 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 HRA's emergency transfer plan provides further information on emergency transfers, and the HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA must be in writing, and the HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA as documentation. It is your choice which of the following to submit if the HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA has agreed to accept.

If you fail or refuse to provide one of these documents within the 14 business days, the HRA does not have to provide you with the protections contained in this notice.

If the HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA does not have to provide you with the protections contained in this notice.

## **Confidentiality**

The HRA 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 HRA must not allow any individual administering assistance or other services on behalf of the HRA (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 HRA must not enter your information into any shared database or disclose your information to any other entity or individual. The HRA, however, may disclose the information provided if:

- You give written permission to the HRA to release the information on a time limited basis.
- The HRA 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 HRA or your landlord to release the information.

VAWA does not limit the HRA'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 HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA can demonstrate the above, the HRA 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 covered housing provider's 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/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-11-16/pdf/2016-25888.pdf>.

Additionally, the HRA 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 St. Cloud HRA, (320) 252-0880, [www.stcloudhra.com](http://www.stcloudhra.com)**.

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 **Anna Marie's Alliance, (320) 251-7203, [www.annamaries.org](http://www.annamaries.org)**.

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 **Anna Marie's Alliance, (320) 251-7203, [www.annamaries.org](http://www.annamaries.org)**.

Victims of stalking seeking help may contact **Anna Marie's Alliance, (320) 251-7203, [www.annamaries.org](http://www.annamaries.org)**.

**Attachment:** Certification form HUD-5382



<b>EXHIBIT 16-2: CERTIFICATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING AND ALTERNATE DOCUMENTATION, FORM HUD-5382</b>
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**CERTIFICATION OF  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE,  
DATING VIOLENCE,  
SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING,  
AND ALTERNATE DOCUMENTATION**

**U.S. Department of Housing  
and Urban Development**

OMB Approval No. 2577-0286

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.

<p><b>EXHIBIT 16-3: EMERGENCY TRANSFER PLAN FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING (HCV VERSION)</b></p>
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Attachment: Certification form HUD-5382

**St. Cloud HRA**

**Emergency Transfer Plan for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking  
Housing Choice Voucher Program**

**Emergency Transfers**

The HRA 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> the HRA 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 unit. The ability to request a transfer is available regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.<sup>4</sup> The ability of the HRA 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 HRA has another dwelling unit that is available and is safe to offer the tenant for temporary or more permanent occupancy.

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 the **public housing and housing choice voucher (HCV) programs** are 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.

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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.

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 HRA's management office and submit a written request for a transfer to **any HRA office**. The HRA 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 HRA'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 HRA 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 HRA 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 or persons that committed an act 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 HRA'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 HRA cannot guarantee that a transfer request will be approved or how long it will take to process a transfer request. The HRA 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 HRA 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 HRA has no safe and available units for which a tenant who needs an emergency transfer is eligible, the HRA 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 HRA 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.



## **Emergency Transfers: Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program**

Tenant-based assistance: If you are a participant in the tenant-based HCV program and request an emergency transfer as described in this plan, the HRA will assist you to move to a safe unit quickly using your existing voucher assistance. The HRA will make exceptions to program regulations restricting moves as required.

At your request, the HRA will refer you to organizations that may be able to further assist you.

Project-based assistance: If you are assisted under the project-based voucher (PBV) program, you may request an emergency transfer under the following programs for which you are not required to apply:

- Tenant-based voucher, if available
- Project-based assistance in the same project (if a vacant unit is available and you determine that the vacant unit is safe)
- Project-based assistance in another development owned by the HRA

Emergency transfers under VAWA will take priority over waiting list admissions for these types of assistance.

You may also request an emergency transfer under the following programs for which you are required to apply:

- Public housing program
- PBV assistance in another development not owned by the HRA
- 

Emergency transfers will not take priority over waiting list admissions for these programs. At your request, the HRA will refer you to organizations that may be able to further assist you.

## **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, and Incest National Network's National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-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.



<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) \_\_\_\_\_



## EXHIBIT 16-5 MODEL OWNER NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

[Insert Name of Housing Provider]

### NOTIFICATION OF YOUR RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA)

VAWA provides protections for Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and PBV applicants, tenants, and participants from being denied assistance on the basis or as a direct result of being a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.

#### **Purpose**

Many of VAWA's protections to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking involve action by the public housing agency (HRA), but some situations involve action by owners of assisted housing. The purpose of this notice (herein called "Notice") is to explain your rights and obligations under VAWA, as an owner of housing assisted through **St. Cloud HRA's** HCV program. Each component of this Notice also provides citations to HUD's applicable regulations.

#### **Denial of Tenancy**

*Protections for applicants:* Owners cannot deny tenancy based on the applicant having been or currently being a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. However, the applicant must be otherwise eligible for tenancy. (See 24 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 982.452(b)(1).)

#### **Eviction**

*Protections for HCV participants:* Incidents or threats of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking will not be considered a serious or repeated lease violation by the victim, or good cause to terminate the tenancy of the victim (24 CFR 5.2005(c)). Protection also applies to criminal activity related directly to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, conducted by a member of a tenant's household or any guest or other person under the tenant's control, if the tenant or an affiliated individual of the tenant is the victim or threatened victim of such domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking (24 CFR 5.2005(b)(2)).

*Limitations of VAWA protections:*

a. Nothing in the VAWA Final Rule limits the authority of an owner, when notified of a court order, to comply with a court order with respect to (24 CFR 5.2005(d)(1)):

- 1) The rights of access or control of property, including civil protection orders issued to protect a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking; or
- 2) The distribution or possession of property among members of a household in a case.

b. Nothing in the VAWA Final Rule limits an owner from evicting a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking for a lease violation that is not premised on an act of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, as long as the owner does not subject the victim to more demanding standards than other tenants when deciding whether to evict. (See 24 CFR 5.2005(d)(2).)

c. Nothing in the VAWA Final Rule limits an owner from evicting a tenant (including the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking) if the owner can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing services to the HCV property would be present if the tenant or lawful occupant is not evicted. (See 24 CFR 5.2005(d)(3).)

- i. In this context, words, gestures, actions, or other indicators will be considered an “actual and imminent threat” if they meet the following standards: An actual and imminent threat consists of a physical danger that is real, would occur within an immediate time frame, and could result in death or serious bodily harm. 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, and the length of time before the potential harm would occur. (See 24 CFR 5.2003.)
- ii. Any eviction due to “actual and imminent threat” should be utilized by an owner 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. Restrictions predicated on public safety cannot be based on stereotypes, but must be tailored to particularized concerns about individual residents. (See 24 CFR 5.2005(d)(4).)

### **Documentation of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking**

If an applicant or tenant requests VAWA protection based on status as a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the owner has the option to request that the victim document or provide written evidence to demonstrate that the violence occurred. However, nothing in HUD’s regulation requires a covered housing provider to request this documentation. (See 24 CFR 5.2007(b)(3).)

If the owner chooses to request this documentation, the owner must make such request in writing. The individual may satisfy this request by providing any one document type listed under 24 CFR 5.2007(b)(1):

- a. Form HUD-55383 (Self-Certification Form); or
- b. A document: 1) Signed by an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, or medical professional or a mental health professional (collectively, “professional”) from whom the victim has sought assistance relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or the effects of abuse:
  - 2) Signed by the applicant or tenant; and
  - 3) That specifies, under penalty of perjury, that the professional believes in the occurrence of the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that is the ground for protection and remedies under 24 CFR part 5, subpart L, and that the incident meets the applicable definition of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking under 24 CFR 5.2003; or
- c. A record of a Federal, State, tribal, territorial or local law enforcement agency, court, or administrative agency; or
- d. At the discretion of a covered housing provider, a statement or other evidence provided by the applicant or tenant.

The owner must accept any of the above items (a – c). The owner has discretion to accept a statement or other evidence (d).

The owner is prohibited from requiring third-party documentation of the domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, unless the submitted documentation contains conflicting information.



If the owner makes a written request for documentation, the owner may require submission of that documentation within 14 business days after the date that the individual received the written request for documentation. (24 CFR 5.2007(a)(2)). The owner may extend this time period at its discretion. During the 14 business day period and any granted extensions of that time, no adverse actions, such as evictions or terminations, can be taken against the individual requesting VAWA protection.

Once a victim provides documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the owner is encouraged to acknowledge receipt of the documentation in a timely manner.

If the applicant or tenant fails to provide documentation that meets the criteria in 24 CFR 5.2007 within 14 business days after receiving the written request for that documentation or within the designated extension period, nothing in VAWA Final Rule may be construed to limit the authority of the covered housing provider to:

- a. Deny admission by the applicant or tenant to the housing or program;
- b. Deny assistance under the covered housing program to the applicant or tenant;
- c. Terminate the participation of the tenant in the covered housing program; or
- d. Evict the tenant, or a lawful occupant that commits a violation of a lease.

An individual's failure to timely provide documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking does not result in a waiver of the individual's right to challenge the denial of assistance or termination, nor does it preclude the individual's ability to raise an incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking at eviction or termination proceedings.

## **Moves**

A victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking may move in violation of their lease if the move is required to protect their safety. If a move results in the termination of the Housing Assistance Payment Contract, the lease is automatically terminated.

## **Lease Bifurcation**

Owners may choose to bifurcate a lease, or remove a household member from a lease in order to evict, remove, terminate occupancy rights, or terminate assistance to such member who engages in criminal activity directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against an affiliated individual or other individual. (See 24 CFR 5.2009(a).) If an owner chooses to bifurcate the lease, the owner must comply with the reasonable time to establish eligibility under the covered housing program or find alternative housing following lease bifurcation provision in 24 CFR 5.2009(b). VAWA protections, including bifurcation, do not apply to guests or unreported members of a household or anyone else residing in a household who is not a tenant.

Eviction, removal, termination of occupancy rights, or termination of assistance must be effected in accordance with the procedures prescribed by federal, state, or local law for termination of leases.

To avoid unnecessary delay in the bifurcation process, HUD recommends that owners seek court-ordered eviction of the perpetrator pursuant to applicable laws. This process results in the underlying lease becoming null and void once the owner regains possession of the unit. The owner would then execute a new lease with the victim.

## **Evictions Due to “Actual and Imminent Threat” or Violations Not Premised on Abuse**

The VAWA Final Rule generally prohibits eviction on the basis or as a direct result of the fact that the applicant or tenant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, if the applicant or tenant otherwise qualifies for assistance, participation or occupancy. (See 24 CFR 5.2005.)

However, the VAWA Final Rule does not prohibit an owner from evicting a tenant for any violation not premised on an act of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that is in question against the tenant or an affiliated individual of the tenant. Nor does the VAWA Final Rule prohibit an owner from evicting a tenant if the owner can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing services to property of the owner would be present if that tenant or lawful occupant is not evicted or terminated from assistance. (See 5.2005(d)(2) and (3).)

In order to demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or employees at the property, the covered housing provider must have objective evidence of words, gestures, actions, or other indicators that meet the standards in the following definition:

Actual and imminent threat refers to a physical danger that is real, would occur within an immediate time frame, and could result in death or serious bodily harm. 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; and
- The length of time before the potential harm would occur.

(See 24 CFR 5.2003 and 5.2005(d)(2).)

## **Confidentiality**

Any information submitted to a covered housing provider under 24 CFR 5.2007, including the fact that an individual is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, must be maintained in strict confidence by the covered housing provider. (See 24 CFR 5.2007(c).)

Employees of the owner (or those within their employ, e.g., contractors) must not have access to the information unless explicitly authorized by the owner for reasons that specifically call for these individuals to have access to this information under applicable Federal, State, or local law (e.g., the information is needed by an employee to provide the VAWA protections to the victim).

The owner must not enter this information into any shared database, or disclose this information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that disclosure is:

- a. Requested or consented to in writing by the individual (victim) in a time-limited release;
- b. Required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance from the covered program; or
- c. Otherwise required by applicable law.

When communicating with the victim, owners must take precautions to ensure compliance with these confidentiality requirements.

## Service Providers

**St. Cloud HRA** has extensive relationships with local service providers. **St. Cloud HRA** staff are available to provide referrals to shelters, counselors, and advocates. These resources are also provided in **St. Cloud HRA's** Annual and 5-Year Plan, Administrative Plan, VAWA Notice of Occupancy Rights, and Emergency Transfer Plan. A list of local service providers is attached to this Notice.

## Definitions

**Actual and imminent threat** refers to a physical danger that is real, would occur within an immediate time frame, and could result in death or serious bodily harm. 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, and the length of time before the potential harm would occur.

**Affiliated individual**, with respect to an individual, means:

- (1) A spouse, parent, brother, sister, or child of that individual, or a person to whom that individual stands in the place of a parent or guardian (for example, the affiliated individual is a person in the care, custody, or control of that individual); or
- (2) Any individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in the household of that individual.

**Bifurcate** means to divide a lease as a matter of law, subject to the permissibility of such process under the requirements of the applicable HUD-covered program and State or local law, such that certain tenants or lawful occupants can be evicted or removed and the remaining tenants or lawful occupants can continue to reside in the unit under the same lease requirements or as may be revised depending upon the eligibility for continued occupancy of the remaining tenants and lawful occupants.

**Dating violence** means violence committed by a person:

- (1) Who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and
- (2) Where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:
  - (i) The length of the relationship;
  - (ii) The type of relationship; and
  - (iii) The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

**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 "spouse or intimate partner of the victim" includes a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim, as determined by the length of the relationship, the type of the relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

**Sexual assault** means any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by Federal, tribal, or State law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent.

**Stalking** means engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to:

- (1) Fear for the person's individual safety or the safety of others; or
- (2) Suffer substantial emotional distress.

**VAWA** means the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, as amended (42 U.S.C. 13925 and 42 U.S.C. 14043e et seq.).

**Attached:**

Legal services and the domestic violence resources for the Metro area

Form HUD-5382 Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking

[insert name of housing provider] VAWA Notice of Occupancy Rights

## EXHIBIT 16-6: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

### Grievance Procedures

#### Complaints, Informal reviews for applicants, informal hearings for participants

##### *Definitions*

**Applicant (applicant family).** A family that has applied for admission to a program but is not yet a participant in the program.

**Complainant.** Any applicant or participant of the housing choice voucher program presents a grievance to the Housing Authority main office in accord with the informal hearing procedure.

**Grievance.** Any dispute which an applicant or participant has with respect to authority action, or failure to act, in accordance with Authority regulations.

**Hearing Officer.** A person selected to hear grievances and render a decision with respect thereto.

**Participant (participant family).** A family that has been admitted to the HRA program and is currently assisted in the program. The family becomes a participant on the effective date of the first HAP contract executed by the HRA for the family (first day of initial lease term).

##### *Complaints*

The HRA will investigate and respond to complaints by participant families, owners, and the general public. The HRA may require that complaints other than HQS violations be put in writing. Anonymous complaints are investigated whenever possible.

##### *Informal Review for the Applicant*

###### A. Informal Review for the Applicant

The HRA will notify the applicant family of a decision denying assistance in writing within 10 business days of the determination. The notice will contain a brief statement of the reasons for the HRA's decision. The notice will state that the applicant may request an informal review within 10 business days of the denial and will describe how to obtain the informal review.

###### B. The HRA must give an applicant the opportunity for an informal review of a decision denying assistance [24 CFR 982.554(a)]. Denial of assistance may include any or all of the following [24 CFR 982.552(a)(2)]:

1. Denying listing on an HRA waiting list
2. Denying or withdrawing a voucher
3. Refusing to enter into a HAP contract or approve a lease

4. Refusing to process or provide assistance under portability procedures

C. Informal reviews are *not* required for the following reasons [24 CFR 982.554(c)]:

1. Discretionary administrative determinations by the HRA
2. General policy issues or class grievances
3. A determination of the family unit size under the HRA subsidy standards
4. An HRA determination not to approve an extension of a voucher term
5. An HRA determination not to grant approval of tenancy
6. An HRA determination that the unit is not in compliance with HQS
7. An HRA determination that the unit is not in accordance with the HQS due to family size or composition

D. Informal Review Process

The HRA will give an applicant an opportunity for an informal review of the HRA decision denying assistance to the applicant. The procedure is as follows:

1. The review will be conducted by any person or persons designated by the HRA other than the person who made or approved the decision under review or a subordinate of this person.
2. The applicant will be given an opportunity to present written or oral objections to the HRA decision under review.
3. The HRA will notify the applicant of the HRA decision after the informal review within 10 business days of the informal review. The notification will include a brief statement of the reasons for the final decision.

E. Considering Circumstances

If the Housing Authority seeks to deny assistance because of prior non-prescribed use, or possession for personal use, of a controlled substance, or pattern of abuse of alcohol, such use or possession or pattern of abuse must have occurred within one year before the date that the Housing Authority provides notice to the family of the Housing Authority determination to deny assistance. In determining whether to deny assistance for these reasons the HRA will consider evidence of whether the household member:

1. Has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program (as applicable) and is no longer engaging in the non-prescribed use of a controlled substance or abuse of alcohol;
2. Has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully and is no longer engaging in the non-prescribed use of a controlled substance or abuse of alcohol; or
3. Is participating in a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program and is no longer engaging in the non-prescribed use of a controlled substance or abuse of alcohol.

F. Informal Review Procedures for Denial of Assistance on the Basis of Ineligible Immigration Status

The applicant family may request that the HRA provide for an informal review after the family has notification of the INS decision on appeal, or in lieu of request of appeal to the INS. This request must be made by the applicant family within 30 days of receipt of the *Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance*, or within 30 days of receipt of the INS appeal decision.

For applicant families, the Informal Review Process above will be utilized with the exception that the applicant family will have up to 30 days of receipt of the *Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance*, or of the INS appeal decision to request the review.

***Informal Hearings for Participants***

In cases described in Chapter 16-III.C. of the HRA Administrative Plan the HRA will give the opportunity for an informal hearing before the HRA terminates housing assistance payments for a family under an outstanding HAP contract.

A. When a Hearing is Required

- a. A determination of the family's annual or adjusted income, and the use of such income to compute the housing assistance payment
- b. A determination of the appropriate utility allowance (if any) for tenant-paid utilities from the HRA utility allowance schedule
- c. A determination of the family unit size under the HRA subsidy standards
- d. A determination to terminate assistance for a participant family because of the family's action or failure to act
- e. A determination to terminate assistance because the participant family has been absent from the assisted unit for longer than the maximum period permitted under the HRA policy and HUD rules
- f. A determination to terminate a family's Family Self Sufficiency contract, withhold supportive services, or propose forfeiture of the family's escrow account [24 CFR 984.303(i)]

B. When a Hearing is Not Required

- a. Discretionary administrative determinations by the HRA
- b. General policy issues or class grievances
- c. Establishment of the HRA schedule of utility allowances for families in the program
- d. An HRA determination not to approve an extension of a voucher term
- e. An HRA determination not to approve a unit or tenancy

- f. An HRA determination that a unit selected by the participant is not in compliance with the HQS
- g. An HRA determination that the unit is not in accordance with HQS because of family size
- h. A determination by the HRA to exercise or not to exercise any right or remedy against an owner under a HAP contract

HRA Policy

The HRA will only offer participants the opportunity for an informal hearing when required to by the regulations, and if the HRA denies a request for a reasonable accommodation (see Chapter 2 of the HRA Administrative Plan).

- i. Denial of the issuance of a voucher or portability of voucher due to funding from HUD

C. Notice to the Family [24 CFR 982.555(c)]

- a. The notice to the family will include all of the following:
  - i. The proposed action or decision of the HRA.
  - ii. A brief statement of the reasons for the decision, including the regulatory reference.
  - iii. The date the proposed action will take place
  - iv. A statement of the family's right to an explanation of the basis for the HRA's decision.
  - v. A statement that if the family does not agree with the decision the family may request an informal hearing of the decision.
  - vi. A statement that the family to request the informal hearing within 10 business days of the notification.
  - vii. To whom the hearing request should be addressed.
  - viii. A copy of the HRA's hearing procedures.
  - ix. That the family may request a remote informal hearing.

D. Hearing Procedures

The HRA and participants will adhere to the following procedures:

- a. Discovery
  - i. Prior to the hearing, the family will be given the opportunity to examine any HRA documents that are directly relevant to the hearing.
    - 1. The family will be allowed to copy any such document at the family's expense.
    - 2. If the HRA does not make the document(s) available for examination on request of the family, the HRA may not rely on the document at the hearing.
  - ii. Prior to the hearing, the HRA will be given the opportunity to examine, at the HRA's offices, any family documents that are directly relevant to the hearing.
    - 1. The HRA will be allowed to copy any such document at the HRA's expense.



2. If the family does not make the document(s) available for examination on request of the HRA, the family may not rely on the document at the hearing.

Note: The term **document** includes records.

b. Participant's Right to Bring Counsel

At its own expense the family may be represented by a lawyer or other representative at the informal hearing.

The participant and all adult members of the household requesting the informal hearing must be present during the informal hearing.

c. Hearing Officer

Informal hearings will be conducted by a person or persons approved by the HRA, other than the person who made or approved the decision or a subordinate of the person who made or approved the decision.

The person who conducts the informal hearing will regulate the conduct of the hearing in accordance with the HRA hearing procedures.

The HRA will make every effort to conduct the informal hearing prior to the actual termination date from the program.

d. Evidence

The HRA and the family must have the opportunity to present evidence and may question any witnesses. Evidence may be considered without regard to admissibility under the rules of evidence applicable to judicial proceedings.

e. Procedures Governing the Hearing

The Housing Authority will endeavor to conduct the informal hearing in a manner which makes it possible for a complainant to proceed without counsel. Ordinarily, the Housing Authority will not be represented by counsel at the informal hearing, unless the complainant is represented. If a complainant

intends to be represented at the informal hearing, the representative must enter an appearance by informing the Housing Authority as soon as reasonably possible, and in any event at least 24 hours before the informal hearing. If the Housing Authority intends to be represented by counsel at the informal hearing, the Housing Authority will notify the complainant as soon as reasonably possible, and in any event at least 24 hours before the informal hearing.

Upon appointment of the hearing officer, the hearing officer must refrain from ex parte communication with the parties. If either party or representative wishes to communicate with the hearing officer, he or she must either communicate in writing, with a copy to the adverse party, or orally in the presence of both parties (or their representatives). For purpose of this subsection, party includes the staff whose decision is being examined by the hearing officer, the complainant and their respective representatives. The evidence considered by the hearing officer will consist of evidence submitted at the hearing.

The Hearing shall be held before a Hearing Officer.

The Complainant shall be afforded a fair hearing providing the basic safeguards of due process which shall include:

- a. The opportunity to examine before the grievance hearing and at the expense of the Complainant, to copy all non-privileged documents, and records of the Housing Authority that are directly relevant to the hearing. Any document not made available, after request thereof by the complainant, may not be used as evidence by the Authority at the hearing;
- b. The right to a private hearing unless the Complainant requests a public hearing;
- c. The right to be represented by counsel or other person chosen as his/her representative;
- d. The right to present evidence and arguments in support of his/her complaint, to controvert evidence relied on by the Housing Authority; and to confront and cross-examine all witnesses on whose testimony or information the Housing Authority relies; and
- e. A decision based solely upon the facts presented at the hearing.

- . If the Hearing Officer determines that the issue has been previously decided in another proceeding the hearing officer may render a decision without proceeding with the hearing.

If the Complainant or Housing Authority fail to appear at the scheduled hearing, the Hearing Officer may make a determination to postpone the hearing for not to exceed five (5) working days OR make a determination that the party has waived his/her opportunity to a hearing. Both parties will be notified of the determination provided that such a determination in no way waives the Complainant's right to appropriate judicial proceedings.

At the hearing, the Complainant must first make a showing of an entitlement of the relief sought and thereafter the Housing Authority must sustain the burden of justifying the Authority actions or failure to act against which the complaint is directed.

The hearing shall be conducted by the Hearing Officer in such a way to be:

- a. Informal - oral or documentary evidence pertinent to the facts and issues raised by the complaint may be received without regard to admissibility under the rules of evidence applicable to judicial proceedings;
- b. Orderly - the hearing officer or panel shall require that the Housing Authority, Complainant, counsel and other participants and spectators conduct themselves in an orderly fashion. Failure to comply with the directions of the Hearing Officer or panel to obtain order may result in exclusion from the proceedings or in a decision adverse to the interest of the disorderly party and granting or denial of the relief sought, as appropriate.

The Complainant or Housing Authority 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.

The Housing Authority will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities to participate in the hearing.

Reasonable accommodation may include qualified sign language interpreters, readers, accessible locations or attendants.

If the resident is visually impaired, any notice which is required under this procedure will be in an accessible format.

Hearing Officer's request for legal or policy advice. Ordinarily, the Hearing Officer will not be an attorney. In circumstances where the Hearing Officer determines that he requires outside assistance in resolving policy or legal issues, the Hearing Officer may proceed in any of the manners listed below. In those circumstances in which the hearing officer's request for assistance involves an opinion of his/her liability or responsibility in the role of hearing officer, the request for assistance may be verbal or in writing at the discretion of the hearing officer. In all other cases, the request and response shall be in writing, and a copy shall be included in the applicant's file.

- a. The Hearing Officer may request policy advice or clarifications from the Executive Director in writing. The Executive Director, with or without legal advice, may then respond in writing.
  - b. The Hearing Officer may consult with HUD.
  - c. The Hearing Officer may inquire of counsel for the applicant and Housing Authority for their respective positions.
  - d. The Hearing Officer may make factual findings and certify a legal issue to the Executive Director for an ultimate decision based upon agency policy as interpreted by the Executive Director.
6. Issuance of Decision

The person who conducts the hearing must issue a written decision within 14 calendar days from the date of the hearing, stating briefly the reasons for the decision. Factual determinations relating to the individual circumstances of the family shall be based on a preponderance of the evidence presented at the hearing.

7. Effect of the Decision

The HRA is not bound by a hearing decision:

- a. Concerning a matter for which the HRA is not required to provide an opportunity for an informal hearing under this Section, or that otherwise exceeds the authority of the person conducting the hearing under the HRA hearing procedures.
- b. Contrary to HUD regulations or requirements, or otherwise contrary to Federal, State, or local law.
- c. If the HRA determines that it is not bound by a hearing decision, the HRA will notify the family within 14 calendar days of the determination, and of the reasons for the determination.

#### E. Considering Circumstances

In deciding whether to terminate assistance because of action or inaction by members of the family, the Housing Authority may consider all of the circumstances in each case, including the seriousness of the case, the extent of participation or culpability of individual family members, and the effects of denial or termination of assistance on other family members who were not involved in the action or failure.

The Housing Authority may impose, as a condition of continued assistance for other family members, a requirement that family members who participated in or were culpable for the action or failure will not reside in the unit. The Housing Authority may permit the other members of a participant family to continue receiving assistance.

If the Housing Authority seeks to terminate assistance because of non-prescribed use, or possession for personal use, of a controlled substance, or pattern of abuse of alcohol, such use or possession or pattern of abuse must have occurred within one year before the date that the Housing Authority provides notice to the family of the Housing Authority determination to deny or terminate assistance. In determining whether to terminate assistance for these reasons the HRA will consider evidence of whether the household member:

- 1. Has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program (as applicable) and is no longer engaging in the non-prescribed use of a controlled substance or abuse of alcohol;
- 2. Has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully and is no longer engaging in the illegal use of a controlled substance or abuse of alcohol; or
- 3. Is participating in a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program and is no longer engaging in the non-prescribed use of a controlled substance or abuse of alcohol.

F. Informal Hearing Procedures for Denial of Assistance on the Basis of Ineligible Immigration Status

The participant family may request that the HRA provide for an informal hearing after the family has notification of the INS decision on appeal, or in lieu of request of appeal to the INS. This request must be made by the participant family within 30 days of receipt of the *Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance*, or within 30 days of receipt of the INS appeal decision.

For the participant families, the Informal Hearing Process above will be utilized with the exception that the participant family will have up to 30 days of receipt of the *Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance*, or of the INS appeal decision.

## **EXHIBIT 16-7: RECORD RETENTION POLICY**

### **Record Retention Policy**

The St. Cloud HRA must maintain complete and accurate accounts and other records for the programs 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 St. Cloud HRA must ensure that all applicant, resident /participant files are maintained in a way that protects an individual's privacy rights. The St. Cloud HRA will ensure that any criminal record received is maintained confidentially, not misused or improperly disseminated. Once the purpose for which the criminal record was requested is accomplished, the criminal record will be destroyed by shredding. The shredding can occur in the St. Cloud HRA office or with a commercial shredding business.

During the term of assisted lease, and for at least three years thereafter, the ST. Cloud HRA must keep a copy of the complete resident/participant file. A complete file includes executed lease agreement, application from family, income, asset, medical, and child care verifications, unit inspection reports, family citizenship, racial, ethnic, gender and disability status, and other records specified by HUD.

All applicant and resident/participant information will be kept in a secure location and access will be limited to authorized St. Cloud HRA staff. St. Cloud HRA staff will not discuss personal family information unless there is a business reason to do so. Inappropriate discussion of a family's information or improper disclosure of a family's information by staff will result in disciplinary action.

1/27/2021





## Chapter 17

### PROJECT-BASED VOUCHERS

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes HUD regulations and HRA policies related to the project-based voucher (PBV) program in nine parts:

Part I: General Requirements. This part describes general provisions of the PBV program including maximum budget authority requirements, relocation requirements, and equal opportunity requirements.

Part II: PBV Owner Proposals. This part includes policies related to the submission and selection of owner proposals for PBV assistance. It describes the factors the HRA will consider when selecting proposals, the type of housing that is eligible to receive PBV assistance, the cap on assistance at projects receiving PBV assistance, subsidy layering requirements, site selection standards, and environmental review requirements.

Part III: Dwelling Units. This part describes requirements related to housing quality standards, the type and frequency of inspections, and housing accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Part IV: Rehabilitated and Newly Constructed Units. This part describes requirements and policies related to the development and completion of rehabilitated and newly constructed housing units that will be receiving PBV assistance.

Part V: Housing Assistance Payments Contract. This part discusses HAP contract requirements and policies including the execution, term, and termination of the HAP contract. In addition, it describes how the HAP contract may be amended and identifies provisions that may be added to the HAP contract at the HRA's discretion.

Part VI: Selection of PBV Program Participants. This part describes the requirements and policies governing how the HRA and the owner will select a family to receive PBV assistance.

Part VII: Occupancy. This part discusses occupancy requirements related to the lease and describes under what conditions families are allowed or required to move. In addition, exceptions to the occupancy cap (which limits PBV assistance to 25 percent of the units in any project) are also discussed.

Part VIII: Determining Rent to Owner. This part describes how the initial rent to owner is determined, and how rent will be redetermined throughout the life of the HAP contract. Rent reasonableness requirements are also discussed.

Part IX: Payments to Owner. This part describes the types of payments owners may receive under this program.



## **PART I: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **17-I.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR 983.5; FR Notice 1/18/17; Notice PIH 2017-21]**

The project-based voucher (PBV) program allows HRAs that already administer a tenant-based voucher program under an annual contributions contract (ACC) with HUD to take up to 20 percent of its authorized units and attach the funding to specific units rather than using it for tenant-based assistance [24 CFR 983.6]. HRAs may only operate a PBV program if doing so is consistent with the HRA's Annual Plan, and the goal of deconcentrating poverty and expanding housing and economic opportunities [42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(13)].

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will operate a project-based voucher program using up to 20 percent of its authorized units for project-based assistance.

See Exhibit 17-1 for information on projects to which the HRA has attached PBV assistance.

PBV assistance may be attached to existing housing or newly constructed or rehabilitated housing [24 CFR 983.52]. If PBV units are already selected for project-based assistance either under an agreement to enter into HAP Contract (Agreement) or a HAP contract, the HRA is not required to reduce the number of these units if the number of authorized units is subsequently reduced. However, the HRA is responsible for determining the amount of budget authority that is available for project-based vouchers and ensuring that the amount of assistance that is attached to units is within the amounts available under the ACC, regardless of whether the HRA has vouchers available for project-basing [FR Notice 1/18/17].

### **Additional Project-Based Units [FR Notice 1/18/17; Notice PIH 2017-21]**

The HRA may project-base an additional 10 percent of its units above the 20 percent program limit. The units may be distributed among one, all, or a combination of the categories as long as the total number of units does not exceed the 10 percent cap. Units qualify under this exception if the units:

- Are specifically made available to house individuals and families that meet the definition of homeless under section 103 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302) and contained in the Continuum of Care Interim Rule at 24 CFR 578.3.
- Are specifically made available to house families that are comprised of or include a veteran.
  - *Veteran* means an individual who has served in the United States Armed Forces.
- Provide supportive housing to persons with disabilities or elderly persons as defined in 24 CFR 5.403.
- Are located in a census tract with a poverty rate of 20 percent or less, as determined in the most recent American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates.

Only units that are under a HAP contract that was first executed on or after April 18, 2017, are covered by the 10 percent exception.

HRA Policy

The HRA may project-base up to an additional 10 percent of its authorized units, up to 30 percent, in accordance with HUD regulations and requirements.

**Units Not Subject to the PBV Program Limitation [FR Notice 1/18/17; Notice PIH 2017-21]**

PBV units under the RAD program and HUD-VASH PBV set-aside vouchers do not count toward the 20 percent limitation when PBV assistance is attached to them.

In addition, units that were previously subject to certain federal rent restrictions or were receiving another type of long-term housing subsidy provided by HUD are not subject to the cap. The unit must be covered under a PBV HAP contract that first became effective on or after April 18, 2017.

HRA Policy

The HRA may project-base units not subject to the 20 percent cap in accordance with HUD regulations and requirements.

### **17-I.B. TENANT-BASED VS. PROJECT-BASED VOUCHER ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 983.2]**

Much of the tenant-based voucher program regulations also apply to the PBV program. Consequently, many of the HRA policies related to tenant-based assistance also apply to PBV assistance. The provisions of the tenant-based voucher regulations that do not apply to the PBV program are listed at 24 CFR 983.2.

#### **HRA Policy**

Except as otherwise noted in this chapter, or unless specifically prohibited by PBV program regulations, the HRA policies for the tenant-based voucher program contained in this administrative plan also apply to the PBV program and its participants.

### **17-I.C. RELOCATION REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 983.7]**

Any persons displaced as a result of implementation of the PBV program must be provided relocation assistance in accordance with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (URA)[42 U.S.C. 4201-4655] and implementing regulations at 49 CFR part 24.

The cost of required relocation assistance may be paid with funds provided by the owner, local public funds, or funds available from other sources. HRAs may not use voucher program funds to cover relocation costs, except that HRAs may use their administrative fee reserve to pay for relocation expenses after all other program administrative expenses are satisfied, and provided that payment of the relocation benefits is consistent with state and local law. Use of the administrative fee for these purposes must also be consistent with other legal and regulatory requirements, including the requirement in 24 CFR 982.155 and other official HUD issuances.

The acquisition of real property for a PBV project is subject to the URA and 49 CFR part 24, subpart B. It is the responsibility of the HRA to ensure the owner complies with these requirements.

### **17-I.D. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 983.8]**

The HRA must comply with all equal opportunity requirements under federal law and regulations in its implementation of the PBV program. This includes the requirements and authorities cited at 24 CFR 5.105(a). In addition, the HRA must comply with the HRA Plan certification on civil rights and affirmatively furthering fair housing, submitted in accordance with 24 CFR 903.7(o).



## **PART II: PBV OWNER PROPOSALS**

### **17-II.A. OVERVIEW**

With certain exceptions, the HRA must describe the procedures for owner submission of PBV proposals and for HRA selection of PBV proposals [24 CFR 983.51]. Before selecting a PBV proposal, the HRA must determine that the PBV proposal complies with HUD program regulations and requirements, including a determination that the property is eligible housing [24 CFR 983.53 and 983.54], complies with the cap on the number of PBV units per project [24 CFR 983.56], and meets the site selection standards [24 CFR 983.57]. The HRA may not commit PBVs until or unless it has followed the proposal selection requirements defined in 24 CFR 983.51 [Notice PIH 2011-54].

### **17-II.B. OWNER PROPOSAL SELECTION PROCEDURES [24 CFR 983.51(b)]**

The HRA must select PBV proposals in accordance with the selection procedures in the HRA administrative plan. The HRA must select PBV proposals by either of the following two methods.

- HRA request for PBV Proposals. The HRA may solicit proposals by using a request for proposals to select proposals on a competitive basis in response to the HRA request. The HRA may not limit proposals to a single site or impose restrictions that explicitly or practically preclude owner submission of proposals for PBV housing on different sites.
- The HRA may select proposal that were previously selected based on a competition. This may include selection of a proposal for housing assisted under a federal, state, or local government housing assistance program that was subject to a competition in accordance with the requirements of the applicable program, community development program, or supportive services program that requires competitive selection of proposals (e.g., HOME, and units for which competitively awarded LIHTCs have been provided), where the proposal has been selected in accordance with such program's competitive selection requirements within three years of the PBV proposal selection date, and the earlier competitive selection proposal did not involve any consideration that the project would receive PBV assistance. The HRA need not conduct another competition.

### **Units Selected Non-Competitively [FR Notice 1/18/17; Notice PIH 2017-21; 24 CFR 983.51(b)]**

For certain public housing projects where the HRA has an ownership interest or control, the HRA may attach PBV assistance non-competitively without following one of the two processes above.

This exception applies when the HRA is engaged in an initiative to improve, develop, or replace a public housing property or site. The public housing units may either currently be in the public housing inventory or may have been removed from the public housing inventory within five years of the date on which the HRA entered into the AHAP or HAP.

If the HRA is planning rehabilitation or new construction on the project, a minimum threshold of \$25,000 per unit in hard costs must be expended.

If the HRA plans to replace public housing by attaching PBV assistance to existing housing in which the HRA has an ownership interest or control, then the \$25,000 per unit minimum threshold does not apply as long as the existing housing substantially complies with HQS.

The HRA must include in the administrative plan what work it plans to do on the property or site and how many PBV units will be added to the site.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will not attach PBVs to projects owned by the HRA as described above.

#### **Solicitation and Selection of PBV Proposals [24 CFR 983.51(c)]**

HRA procedures for selecting PBV proposals must be designed and actually operated to provide broad public notice of the opportunity to offer PBV proposals for consideration by the HRA. The public notice procedures may include publication of the public notice in a local newspaper of general circulation and other means designed and actually operated to provide broad public notice. The public notice of the HRA request for PBV proposals must specify the submission deadline. Detailed application and selection information must be provided at the request of interested parties.

#### HRA Policy

##### HRA Request for Proposals for Rehabilitated and Newly Constructed Units

The HRA will advertise its request for proposals (RFP) for rehabilitated and newly constructed housing in the following newspapers and trade journals.

St. Cloud Times

The advertisement will state the number of vouchers available to be project-based, the type of units that will be considered, the submission deadline, and will note how to obtain the full RFP with information on the application and selection process. Advertisements will also contain a statement that participation in the PBV program requires compliance with Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) requirements.

In addition, the HRA will post the RFP and proposal submission and rating and ranking procedures on its website.

The HRA will publish its advertisement in the newspapers and trade journals mentioned above for at least one day per week for three consecutive weeks. The advertisement will specify the number of units the HRA estimates that it will be able to assist under the funding the HRA is making available. Proposals will be due in the HRA office by close of business 30 calendar days from the date of the last publication.

In order for the proposal to be considered, the owner must submit the proposal to the HRA by the published deadline date, and the proposal must respond to all requirements as outlined in the RFP. Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed.



The HRA will rate and rank proposals for rehabilitated and newly constructed housing using the following criteria:

- Owner experience and capability to build or rehabilitate housing as identified in the RFP;

- Extent to which the project furthers the HRA goal of deconcentrating poverty and expanding housing and economic opportunities;

- If applicable, the extent to which services for special populations are provided on site or in the immediate area for occupants of the property; and

- In order to promote partially assisted projects, projects where less than 25 percent of the units will be assisted will be rated higher than projects where 25 percent or more of the units will be assisted. In the case of projects for occupancy by the elderly, persons with disabilities or families needing other services, the HRA will rate partially assisted projects on the percentage of units assisted. Projects with the lowest percentage of assisted units will receive the highest score.

#### HRA Requests for Proposals for Existing Housing Units

The HRA will advertise its request for proposals (RFP) for existing housing in the following newspapers and trade journals.

St. Cloud Times

The advertisement will state the number of vouchers available to be project-based, the type of units that will be considered, the submission deadline, and will note how to obtain the full RFP with information on the application and selection process. Advertisements will also contain a statement that participation in the PBV program requires compliance with Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) requirements.

In addition, the HRA will post the notice inviting such proposal submission and the rating and ranking procedures on its website.

The HRA will periodically publish its advertisement in the newspapers and trade journals mentioned above for at least one day per week for three consecutive weeks. The advertisement will specify the number of units the HRA estimates that it will be able to assist under the funding the HRA is making available. Owner proposals will be accepted on a first-come first-served basis and will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Experience as an owner in the tenant-based voucher program and owner compliance with the owner's obligations under the tenant-based program;

- Extent to which the project furthers the HRA goal of deconcentrating poverty and expanding housing and economic opportunities;

- If applicable, extent to which services for special populations are provided on site or in the immediate area for occupants of the property; and

- Extent to which units are occupied by families that are eligible to participate in the PBV program.

HRA Selection of Proposals Subject to a Previous Competition under a Federal, State, or Local Housing Assistance Program

The HRA will accept proposals for PBV assistance from owners that were competitively selected under another federal, state or local housing assistance program, including projects that were competitively awarded Low-Income Housing Tax Credits on an ongoing basis.

The HRA may periodically advertise that it is accepting proposals, in the following newspapers and trade journals:

St. Cloud Times

The advertisement will state the number of vouchers available to be project-based, the type of units that will be considered, the submission deadline, and will note how to obtain the full RFP with information on the application and selection process. Advertisements will also contain a statement that participation in the PBV program requires compliance with Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) requirements.

In addition to, or in place of advertising, the HRA may also directly contact specific owners that have already been selected for Federal, state, or local housing assistance based on a previously held competition, to inform them of available PBV assistance.

Proposals will be reviewed on a first-come first-served basis. The HRA will evaluate each proposal on its merits using the following factors:

- Extent to which the project furthers the HRA goal of deconcentrating poverty and expanding housing and economic opportunities; and

- Extent to which the proposal complements other local activities such as the redevelopment of a public housing site under the HOPE VI program, the HOME program, CDBG activities, other development activities in a HUD-designated Enterprise Zone, Economic Community, Choice Neighborhood, or Renewal Community.

## **HRA-Owned Units [24 CFR 983.51(e), 983.59, FR Notice 1/18/17, and Notice PIH 2017-21]**

A HRA-owned unit may be assisted under the PBV program only if the HUD field office or HUD-approved independent entity reviews the selection process and determines that the HRA-owned units were appropriately selected based on the selection procedures specified in the HRA administrative plan. This also applies to noncompetitive selections. If the HRA selects a proposal for housing that is owned or controlled by the HRA, the HRA must identify the entity that will review the HRA proposal selection process and perform specific functions with respect to rent determinations, the term of the HAP contract, and inspections.

In the case of HRA-owned units, the term of the HAP contract and any HAP contract renewal must be agreed upon by the HRA and a HUD-approved independent entity. In addition, an independent entity must determine the initial rent to owner, the redetermined rent to owner, and reasonable rent. Housing quality standards inspections must also be conducted by an independent entity.

The independent entity that performs these program services may be the unit of general local government for the HRA jurisdiction (unless the HRA is itself the unit of general local government or an agency of such government) or another HUD-approved public or private independent entity.

### HRA Policy

The HRA may submit a proposal for project-based housing that is owned or controlled by the HRA. If the proposal for HRA-owned housing is selected, the HRA will use a HUD-approved independent entity to review the HRA selection process. The HRA will obtain HUD approval of a HUD-approved independent entity prior to selecting the proposal for HRA-owned housing.

The HRA may only compensate the independent entity from HRA ongoing administrative fee income (including amounts credited to the administrative fee reserve). The HRA may not use other program receipts to compensate the independent entity for its services. The HRA and independent entity may not charge the family any fee for the appraisal or the services provided by the independent entity.

## **HRA Notice of Owner Selection [24 CFR 983.51(d)]**

The HRA must give prompt written notice to the party that submitted a selected proposal and must also give prompt public notice of such selection. Public notice procedures may include publication of public notice in a local newspaper of general circulation and other means designed and actually operated to provide broad public notice.

### HRA Policy

Within 10 business days of the HRA making the selection, the HRA will notify the selected owner in writing of the owner's selection for the PBV program. The HRA will also notify in writing all owners that submitted proposals that were not selected and advise such owners of the name of the selected owner.

In addition, the HRA will publish its notice for selection of PBV proposals for two consecutive days in the same newspapers and trade journals the HRA used to solicit the proposals. The announcement will include the name of the owner that was selected for the PBV program. The HRA will also post the notice of owner selection on its electronic web site.

The HRA will make available to any interested party its rating and ranking sheets and documents that identify the HRA basis for selecting the proposal. These documents will be available for review by the public and other interested parties for one month after publication of the notice of owner selection. The HRA will not make available sensitive owner information that is privileged, such as financial statements and similar information about the owner.

The HRA will make these documents available for review at the HRA during normal business hours. The cost for reproduction of allowable documents will be \$.25 per page.

## **17-II.C. HOUSING TYPE [24 CFR 983.52]**

The HRA may attach PBV assistance for units in existing housing or for newly constructed or rehabilitated housing developed under and in accordance with an agreement to enter into a housing assistance payments contract that was executed prior to the start of construction. A housing unit is considered an existing unit for purposes of the PBV program, if, at the time of notice of HRA selection, the units substantially comply with HQS. Units for which new construction or rehabilitation began after the owner's proposal submission but prior to the execution of the HAP do not subsequently qualify as existing housing. Units that were newly constructed or rehabilitated in violation of program requirements also do not qualify as existing housing.

The HRA must decide what housing type, new construction, rehabilitation, or existing housing, will be used to develop project-based housing. The HRA choice of housing type must be reflected in its solicitation for proposals.

## **17-II.D. PROHIBITION OF ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN UNITS**

### **Ineligible Housing Types [24 CFR 983.53]**

The HRA may not attach or pay PBV assistance to shared housing units; units on the grounds of a penal reformatory, medical, mental, or similar public or private institution; nursing homes or facilities providing continuous psychiatric, medical, nursing services, board and care, or intermediate care (except that assistance may be provided in assisted living facilities); units that are owned or controlled by an educational institution or its affiliate and are designated for occupancy by students; manufactured homes; and transitional housing. In addition, the HRA may not attach or pay PBV assistance for a unit occupied by an owner and the HRA may not select or enter into an agreement to enter into a HAP contract or HAP contract for a unit occupied by a family ineligible for participation in the PBV program. A member of a cooperative who owns shares in the project assisted under the PBV program is not considered an owner for purposes of participation in the PBV program. Finally, PBV assistance may not be attached to units for which construction or rehabilitation has started after the proposal submission and prior to the execution of an AHAP.

### **Subsidized Housing [24 CFR 983.54]**

A HRA may not attach or pay PBV assistance to units in any of the following types of subsidized housing:

- A public housing unit;
- A unit subsidized with any other form of Section 8 assistance;
- A unit subsidized with any governmental rent subsidy;
- A unit subsidized with any governmental subsidy that covers all or any part of the operating costs of the housing;
- A unit subsidized with Section 236 rental assistance payments (except that a HRA may attach assistance to a unit subsidized with Section 236 interest reduction payments);
- A Section 202 project for non-elderly with disabilities;
- Section 811 project-based supportive housing for persons with disabilities;
- Section 202 supportive housing for the elderly;
- A Section 101 rent supplement project;
- A unit subsidized with any form of tenant-based rental assistance;
- A unit with any other duplicative federal, state, or local housing subsidy, as determined by HUD or the HRA in accordance with HUD requirements.

#### **17-II.E. SUBSIDY LAYERING REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 983.55, Notice PIH 2013-11, and FR Notice 2/28/20]**

The subsidy layering review is intended to prevent excessive public assistance by combining (layering) housing assistance payment subsidy under the PBV program with other governmental housing assistance from federal, state, or local agencies, including assistance such as tax concessions or tax credits.

HUD requires new construction and rehabilitation housing that will include forms of governmental assistance other than PBVs to undergo a subsidy layering review (SLR) prior to entering into an Agreement to Enter into Housing Assistance Payments Contract (AHAP). Subsidy layering requirements do not apply to existing housing, when PBV is the only governmental assistance, or for projects already subject to a PBV HAP contract, even if the project is recapitalized with outside sources of funding.

When a HRA selects a new construction or rehabilitation project, the HRA must require information regarding all HUD and/or other federal, state, or local governmental assistance to be disclosed by the project owner using Form HUD-2880. Appendix A of FR Notice 2/28/20 contains a list of all required documentation.

Either HUD or a HUD-approved housing credit agency (HCA) in the HRA's jurisdiction performs the subsidy layering review. The HRA must request an SLR through their local HUD Field Office or, if eligible, through a participating HCA.

If the SLR request is submitted to an approved HCA, and the proposed project-based voucher assistance meets HUD subsidy layering requirements, the HCA must submit a certification to HUD and notify the HRA. The HRA may proceed to execute an AHAP at that time if the environmental approval is received.

The HAP contract must contain the owner's certification that the project has not received and will not receive (before or during the term of the HAP contract) any public assistance for acquisition, development, or operation of the housing other than assistance disclosed in the subsidy layering review in accordance with HUD requirements.

## **17-II.F. CAP ON NUMBER OF PBV UNITS IN EACH PROJECT**

### **25 Percent per Project Cap [24 CFR 983.56, FR Notice 1/18/17, and Notice PIH 2017-21]**

In general, the HRA may not select a proposal to provide PBV assistance for units in a project or enter into an agreement to enter into a HAP or a HAP contract to provide PBV assistance for units in a project, if the total number of dwelling units in the project that will receive PBV assistance during the term of the PBV HAP contract is more than the greater of 25 units or 25 percent of the number of dwelling units (assisted or unassisted) in the project.

### **Exceptions to 25 Percent per Project Cap [FR Notice 1/18/17; Notice PIH 2017-21]**

As of April 18, 2017, units are not counted against the 25 percent or 25-unit per project cap if:

- The units are exclusively for elderly families
- The units are for households eligible for supportive services available to all families receiving PBV assistance in the project
  - If the project is located in a census tract with a poverty rate of 20 percent or less, as determined in the most recent American Community Survey Five-Year estimates, the project cap is the greater of 25 units or 40 percent (instead of 25 percent) of the units in the project [FR Notice 7/14/17].

The Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016 (HOTMA) eliminated the project cap exemption for projects that serve disabled families and modified the exception for supportive services. Projects where these caps were implemented prior to HOTMA (HAP contracts executed prior to April 18, 2017) may continue to use the former exceptions and may renew their HAP contracts under the old requirements, unless the HRA and owner agree to change the conditions of the HAP contract. However, this change may not be made if it would jeopardize an assisted family's eligibility for continued assistance in the project.

### ***Supportive Services***

HRAs must include in the HRA administrative plan the type of services offered to families for a project to qualify for the exception and the extent to which such services will be provided. As of April 18, 2017, the project must make supportive services available to all families receiving PBV assistance in the project, but the family does not actually have to accept and receive supportive services for the exception to apply to the unit, although the family must be eligible to receive the supportive services. It is not necessary that the services be provided at or by the project, but must be reasonably available to families receiving PBV assistance at the project and designed to help families in the project achieve self-sufficiency or live in the community as independently as possible. A HRA may not require participation in the supportive service as a condition of living in the excepted unit, although such services may be offered.

### **HRA Policy**

Excepted units will be limited to units for elderly families.

### **Projects not Subject to a Project Cap [FR Notice 1/18/17; Notice PIH 2017-21]**

PBV units that were previously subject to certain federal rent restrictions or receiving another type of long-term housing subsidy provided by HUD are exempt from the project cap. In other words, 100 percent of the units in these projects may receive PBV assistance.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA does not have any PBV units that are subject to the per project cap exception.

### **Promoting Partially Assisted Projects [24 CFR 983.56(c)]**

A HRA may establish local requirements designed to promote PBV assistance in partially assisted projects. A *partially assisted project* is a project in which there are fewer units covered by a HAP contract than residential units [24 CFR 983.3].

A HRA may establish a per-project cap on the number of units that will receive PBV assistance or other project-based assistance in a multifamily project containing excepted units or in a single-family building. A HRA may also determine not to provide PBV assistance for excepted units, or the HRA may establish a per-project cap of less than 25 units or 25 percent of units.

#### HRA Policy:

Excepted units will be limited to units for elderly families.

Beyond that, the HRA will not impose any further cap on the number of PBV units assisted per project.



## **17-II.G. SITE SELECTION STANDARDS**

### **Compliance with PBV Goals, Civil Rights Requirements, and HQS Site Standards [24 CFR 983.57(b)]**

The HRA may not select a proposal for existing, newly constructed, or rehabilitated PBV housing on a site or enter into an agreement to enter into a HAP contract or HAP contract for units on the site, unless the HRA has determined that PBV assistance for housing at the selected site is consistent with the goal of deconcentrating poverty and expanding housing and economic opportunities. The standard for deconcentrating poverty and expanding housing and economic opportunities must be consistent with the HRA Plan under 24 CFR 903 and the HRA administrative plan.

In addition, prior to selecting a proposal, the HRA must determine that the site is suitable from the standpoint of facilitating and furthering full compliance with the applicable Civil Rights Laws, regulations, and Executive Orders, and that the site meets the HQS site and neighborhood standards at 24 CFR 982.401(l).

#### HRA Policy

It is the HRA goal to select sites for PBV housing that provide for deconcentrating poverty and expanding housing and economic opportunities. In complying with this goal, the HRA will limit approval of sites for PBV housing in census tracts that have poverty concentrations of 20 percent or less.

However, the HRA will grant exceptions to the 20 percent standard where the HRA determines that the PBV assistance will complement other local redevelopment activities designed to deconcentrate poverty and expand housing and economic opportunities in census tracts with poverty concentrations greater than 20 percent, such as sites in:

- A census tract in which the proposed PBV development will be located in a HUD-designated Enterprise Zone, Economic Community, Choice Neighborhood, or Renewal Community;

- A census tract where the concentration of assisted units will be or has decreased as a result of public housing demolition and HOPE VI redevelopment;

- A census tract in which the proposed PBV development will be located is undergoing significant revitalization as a result of state, local, or federal dollars invested in the area;

- A census tract where new market rate units are being developed where such market rate units will positively impact the poverty rate in the area;

- A census tract where there has been an overall decline in the poverty rate within the past five years; or

- A census tract where there are meaningful opportunities for educational and economic advancement.

### **Existing and Rehabilitated Housing Site and Neighborhood Standards [24 CFR 983.57(d)]**

The HRA may not enter into an agreement to enter into a HAP contract nor enter into a HAP contract for existing or rehabilitated housing until it has determined that the site complies with the HUD required site and neighborhood standards. The site must:

- Be adequate in size, exposure, and contour to accommodate the number and type of units proposed;
- Have adequate utilities and streets available to service the site;
- Promote a greater choice of housing opportunities and avoid undue concentration of assisted persons in areas containing a high proportion of low-income persons;
- Be accessible to social, recreational, educational, commercial, and health facilities and services and other municipal facilities and services equivalent to those found in neighborhoods consisting largely of unassisted similar units; and
- Be located so that travel time and cost via public transportation or private automobile from the neighborhood to places of employment is not excessive.

### **New Construction Site and Neighborhood Standards [24 CFR 983.57(e)]**

In order to be selected for PBV assistance, a site for newly constructed housing must meet the following HUD required site and neighborhood standards:

- The site must be adequate in size, exposure, and contour to accommodate the number and type of units proposed;
- The site must have adequate utilities and streets available to service the site;
- The site must not be located in an area of minority concentration unless the HRA determines that sufficient, comparable opportunities exist for housing for minority families in the income range to be served by the proposed project outside areas of minority concentration or that the project is necessary to meet overriding housing needs that cannot be met in that housing market area;
- The site must not be located in a racially mixed area if the project will cause a significant increase in the proportion of minority to non-minority residents in the area.
- The site must promote a greater choice of housing opportunities and avoid undue concentration of assisted persons in areas containing a high proportion of low-income persons;
- The neighborhood must not be one that is seriously detrimental to family life or in which substandard dwellings or other undesirable conditions predominate;
- The housing must be accessible to social, recreational, educational, commercial, and health facilities and services and other municipal facilities and services equivalent to those found in neighborhoods consisting largely of unassisted similar units; and
- Except for housing designed for elderly persons, the housing must be located so that travel time and cost via public transportation or private automobile from the neighborhood to places of employment is not excessive.

## **17-II.H. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW [24 CFR 983.58]**

The HRA activities under the PBV program are subject to HUD environmental regulations in 24 CFR parts 50 and 58. The *responsible entity* is responsible for performing the federal environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.). The HRA may not enter into an agreement to enter into a HAP contract nor enter into a HAP contract until it has complied with the environmental review requirements.

In the case of existing housing, the responsible entity that is responsible for the environmental review under 24 CFR part 58 must determine whether or not PBV assistance is categorically excluded from review under the National Environmental Policy Act and whether or not the assistance is subject to review under the laws and authorities listed in 24 CFR 58.5.

The HRA may not enter into an agreement to enter into a HAP contract or a HAP contract with an owner, and the HRA, the owner, and its contractors may not acquire, rehabilitate, convert, lease, repair, dispose of, demolish, or construct real property or commit or expend program or local funds for PBV activities under this part, until the environmental review is completed.

The HRA must supply all available, relevant information necessary for the responsible entity to perform any required environmental review for any site. The HRA must require the owner to carry out mitigating measures required by the responsible entity (or HUD, if applicable) as a result of the environmental review.



## **PART III: DWELLING UNITS**

### **17-III.A. OVERVIEW**

This part identifies the special housing quality standards that apply to the PBV program, housing accessibility for persons with disabilities, and special procedures for conducting housing quality standards inspections.

### **17-III.B. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS [24 CFR 983.101]**

The housing quality standards (HQS) for the tenant-based program, including those for special housing types, generally apply to the PBV program. HQS requirements for shared housing, manufactured home space rental, and the homeownership option do not apply because these housing types are not assisted under the PBV program.

The physical condition standards at 24 CFR 5.703 do not apply to the PBV program.

#### **Lead-based Paint [24 CFR 983.101(c)]**

The lead-based paint requirements for the tenant-based voucher program do not apply to the PBV program. Instead, The Lead-based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act (42 U.S.C. 4821-4846), the Residential Lead-based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992 (42 U.S.C. 4851-4856), and implementing regulations at 24 CFR Part 35, Subparts A, B, H, and R, and 40 CFR 745.227, apply to the PBV program.

### **17-III.C. HOUSING ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

The housing must comply with program accessibility requirements of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794) and implementing regulations at 24 CFR part 8. The HRA must ensure that the percentage of accessible dwelling units complies with the requirements of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794), as implemented by HUD's regulations at 24 CFR 8, subpart C.

Housing first occupied after March 13, 1991, must comply with design and construction requirements of the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 and implementing regulations at 24 CFR 100.205, as applicable. (24 CFR 983.102)

## **17-III.D. INSPECTING UNITS**

### **Pre-selection Inspection [24 CFR 983.103(a)]**

The HRA must examine the proposed site before the proposal selection date. If the units to be assisted already exist, the HRA must inspect all the units before the proposal selection date, and must determine whether the units substantially comply with HQS. To qualify as existing housing, units must substantially comply with HQS on the proposal selection date. However, the HRA may not execute the HAP contract until the units fully comply with HQS.

### **Pre-HAP Contract Inspections [24 CFR 983.103(b), FR Notice 1/18/17, and Notice PIH 2017-20]**

The HRA must inspect each contract unit before execution of the HAP contract. The HRA may not provide assistance on behalf of the family until the unit fully complies with HQS, unless the HRA has adopted a policy to enter into a HAP contract for units that fail the initial HQS inspection as a result of only non-life-threatening conditions, or if the unit passed an alternative inspection.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will not provide assistance on behalf of the family until the unit fully complies with HQS.

### **Turnover Inspections [24 CFR 983.103(c)]**

Before providing assistance to a new family in a contract unit, the HRA must inspect the unit. The HRA may not provide assistance on behalf of the family until the unit fully complies with HQS.

### **Annual/Biennial Inspections [24 CFR 983.103(d); FR Notice 6/25/14]**

At least once every 24 months during the term of the HAP contract, the HRA must inspect a random sample consisting of at least 20 percent of the contract units in each building to determine if the contract units and the premises are maintained in accordance with HQS. Turnover inspections are not counted toward meeting this inspection requirement.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will inspect the contract units in each building to determine if the contract units and the premises are maintained in accordance with HQS on an annual basis.

If more than 20 percent of the sample of inspected contract units in a building fail the initial inspection, the HRA must reinspect 100 percent of the contract units in the building.

**Other Inspections [24 CFR 983.103(e)]**

The HRA must inspect contract units whenever needed to determine that the contract units comply with HQS and that the owner is providing maintenance, utilities, and other services in accordance with the HAP contract. The HRA must take into account complaints and any other information coming to its attention in scheduling inspections.

The HRA must conduct follow-up inspections needed to determine if the owner (or, if applicable, the family) has corrected an HQS violation, and must conduct inspections to determine the basis for exercise of contractual and other remedies for owner or family violation of HQS.

In conducting HRA supervisory quality control HQS inspections, the HRA should include a representative sample of both tenant-based and project-based units.

**Inspecting HRA-Owned Units [24 CFR 983.103(f)]**

In the case of HRA-owned units, the inspections must be performed by an independent entity designated by the HRA and approved by HUD. The independent entity must furnish a copy of each inspection report to the HRA and to the HUD field office where the project is located. The HRA must take all necessary actions in response to inspection reports from the independent entity, including exercise of contractual remedies for violation of the HAP contract by the HRA-owner.





## **PART IV: REHABILITATED AND NEWLY CONSTRUCTED UNITS**

### **17-IV.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR 983.151]**

There are specific requirements that apply to PBV assistance for newly constructed or rehabilitated housing that do not apply to PBV assistance in existing housing. This part describes the requirements unique to this type of assistance.

Housing selected for this type of assistance may not at a later date be selected for PBV assistance as existing housing.

### **17-IV.B. AGREEMENT TO ENTER INTO HAP CONTRACT**

In order to offer PBV assistance in rehabilitated or newly constructed units, the HRA must enter into an agreement to enter into HAP contract (Agreement) with the owner of the property. The Agreement must be in the form required by HUD [24 CFR 983.152(b)]. The HRA may not enter into an Agreement if commencement of construction or rehabilitation has commenced after proposal submission [24 CFR 983.152(c)]. Construction begins when excavation or site preparation (including clearing of the land) begins for the housing. Rehabilitation begins with the physical commencement of rehabilitation activity on the housing.

In the Agreement the owner agrees to develop the PBV contract units to comply with HQS, and the HRA agrees that upon timely completion of such development in accordance with the terms of the Agreement, the HRA will enter into a HAP contract with the owner for the contract units [24 CFR 983.152(a)].

#### **Content of the Agreement [24 CFR 983.152(d)]**

At a minimum, the Agreement must describe the following features of the housing to be developed and assisted under the PBV program:

- Site and the location of the contract units;
- Number of contract units by area (size) and number of bedrooms and bathrooms;
- Services, maintenance, or equipment to be supplied by the owner without charges in addition to the rent;
- Utilities available to the contract units, including a specification of utility services to be paid by the owner and utility services to be paid by the tenant;
- An indication of whether or not the design and construction requirements of the Fair Housing Act and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 apply to units under the Agreement. If applicable, any required work item resulting from these requirements must be included in the description of work to be performed under the Agreement;
- Estimated initial rents to owner for the contract units;
- Description of the work to be performed under the Agreement. For rehabilitated units, the description must include the rehabilitation work write up and, where determined necessary by the HRA, specifications and plans. For new construction units, the description must include the working drawings and specifications.

- Any additional requirements for quality, architecture, or design over and above HQS.

#### **Execution of the Agreement [24 CFR 983.153]**

The Agreement must be executed promptly after HRA notice of proposal selection to the selected owner. The HRA may not enter into the Agreement if construction or rehabilitation has started after proposal submission. Generally, the HRA may not enter into the Agreement with the owner until the subsidy layering review is completed. Likewise, the HRA may not enter into the Agreement until the environmental review is completed and the HRA has received environmental approval. However, the HRA does not need to conduct a subsidy layering review in the case of a HAP contract for existing housing or if the applicable state or local agency has conducted such a review. Similarly, environmental reviews are not required for existing structures unless otherwise required by law or regulation.

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will enter into the Agreement with the owner within 10 business days of receiving both environmental approval and notice that subsidy layering requirements have been met, and before construction or rehabilitation work is started.

## **17-IV.C. CONDUCT OF DEVELOPMENT WORK**

### **Labor Standards [24 CFR 983.154(b)]**

If an Agreement covers the development of nine or more contract units (whether or not completed in stages), the owner and the owner's contractors and subcontractors must pay Davis-Bacon wages to laborers and mechanics employed in the development of housing. The HUD-prescribed form of the Agreement will include the labor standards clauses required by HUD, such as those involving Davis-Bacon wage rates.

The owner, contractors, and subcontractors must also comply with the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act, Department of Labor regulations in 29 CFR part 5, and other applicable federal labor relations laws and regulations. The HRA must monitor compliance with labor standards.

### **Owner Disclosure [24 CFR 983.154(d) and (e)]**

The Agreement and HAP contract must include a certification by the owner that the owner and other project principals are not on the U.S. General Services Administration list of parties excluded from federal procurement and non-procurement programs.

The owner must also disclose any possible conflict of interest that would be a violation of the Agreement, the HAP contract, or HUD regulations.

#### **17-IV.D. COMPLETION OF HOUSING**

The Agreement must specify the deadlines for completion of the housing, and the owner must develop and complete the housing in accordance with these deadlines. The Agreement must also specify the deadline for submission by the owner of the required evidence of completion.

##### **Evidence of Completion [24 CFR 983.155(b)]**

At a minimum, the owner must submit the following evidence of completion to the HRA in the form and manner required by the HRA:

- Owner certification that the work has been completed in accordance with HQS and all requirements of the Agreement; and
- Owner certification that the owner has complied with labor standards and equal opportunity requirements in development of the housing.

At the HRA's discretion, the Agreement may specify additional documentation that must be submitted by the owner as evidence of housing completion.

##### HRA Policy

The HRA will determine the need for the owner to submit additional documentation as evidence of housing completion on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature of the PBV project. The HRA will specify any additional documentation requirements in the Agreement to enter into HAP contract.

##### **HRA Acceptance of Completed Units [24 CFR 983.156]**

Upon notice from the owner that the housing is completed, the HRA must inspect to determine if the housing has been completed in accordance with the Agreement, including compliance with HQS and any additional requirements imposed under the Agreement. The HRA must also determine if the owner has submitted all required evidence of completion.

If the work has not been completed in accordance with the Agreement, the HRA must not enter into the HAP contract.

If the HRA determines the work has been completed in accordance with the Agreement and that the owner has submitted all required evidence of completion, the HRA must submit the HAP contract for execution by the owner and must then execute the HAP contract.

## **PART V: HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS CONTRACT (HAP)**

### **17-V.A. OVERVIEW**

The HRA must enter into a HAP contract with an owner for units that are receiving PBV assistance. The purpose of the HAP contract is to provide housing assistance payments for eligible families. Housing assistance is paid for contract units leased and occupied by eligible families during the HAP contract term. With the exception of single-family scattered-site projects, a HAP contract shall cover a single project. If multiple projects exist, each project is covered by a separate HAP contract. The HAP contract must be in the form required by HUD [24 CFR 983.202(a)].

### **17-V.B. HAP CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Contract Information [24 CFR 983.203]**

The HAP contract must specify the following information:

- The total number of contract units by number of bedrooms;
- The project's name, street address, city or county, state and zip code, block and lot number (if known), and any other information necessary to clearly identify the site and the building;
- The number of contract units in each building, the location of each contract unit, the area of each contract unit, and the number of bedrooms and bathrooms in each contract unit;
- Services, maintenance, and equipment to be supplied by the owner and included in the rent to owner;
- Utilities available to the contract units, including a specification of utility services to be paid by the owner (included in rent) and utility services to be paid by the tenant;
- Features provided to comply with program accessibility requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and implementing regulations at 24 CFR part 8;
- The HAP contract term;
- The number of units in any project that will exceed the 25 percent per project cap, which will be set aside for occupancy by qualifying families (elderly and/or disabled families and families receiving supportive services); and
- The initial rent to owner for the first 12 months of the HAP contract term.

## **Execution of the HAP Contract [24 CFR 983.204]**

The HRA may not enter into a HAP contract until each contract unit has been inspected and the HRA has determined that the unit complies with the Housing Quality Standards (HQS), unless the HRA has adopted a policy to enter into a HAP contract for units that fail the initial HQS inspection as a result of only non-life-threatening conditions. For existing housing, the HAP contract must be executed promptly after the HRA selects the owner proposal and inspects the housing units. For newly constructed or rehabilitated housing the HAP contract must be executed after the HRA has inspected the completed units and has determined that the units have been completed in accordance with the agreement to enter into HAP, and the owner furnishes all required evidence of completion.

### HRA Policy

For existing housing, the HAP contract will be executed within 10 business days of the HRA determining that all units pass HQS.

For rehabilitated or newly constructed housing, the HAP contract will be executed within 10 business days of the HRA determining that the units have been completed in accordance with the agreement to enter into HAP, all units meet HQS, and the owner has submitted all required evidence of completion.

## **Term of HAP Contract [24 CFR 983.205, FR Notice 1/18/17, and Notice PIH 2017-21]**

The HRA may enter into a HAP contract with an owner for an initial term of no less than one year and no more than 20 years for each contract unit. The length of the term of the HAP contract for any contract unit may not be less than one year, nor more than 20 years. In the case of HRA-owned units, the term of the HAP contract must be agreed upon by the HRA and the independent entity approved by HUD [24 CFR 983.59(b)(2)].

### HRA Policy

The term of all PBV HAP contracts will be negotiated with the owner on a case-by-case basis.

At the time of the initial HAP contract term or any time before expiration of the HAP contract, the HRA may extend the term of the contract for an additional term of up to 20 years if the HRA determines an extension is appropriate to continue providing affordable housing for low-income families. A HAP contract extension may not exceed 20 years. A HRA may provide for multiple extensions; however, in no circumstances may such extensions exceed 20 years, cumulatively. Extensions after the initial extension are allowed at the end of any extension term, provided that not more than 24 months prior to the expiration of the previous extension contract the HRA agrees to extend the term, and that such extension is appropriate to continue providing affordable housing for low-income families or to expand housing opportunities. Extensions after the initial extension term shall not begin prior to the expiration date of the previous extension term. Subsequent extensions are subject to the same limitations. All extensions must be on the form and subject to the conditions prescribed by HUD at the time of the extension. In the case of HRA-owned units, any extension of the term of the HAP contract must be agreed upon by the HRA and the independent entity approved by HUD [24 CFR 983.59(b)(2)].

## HRA Policy

When determining whether or not to extend an expiring PBV contract, the HRA will consider several factors including, but not limited to:

The cost of extending the contract and the amount of available budget authority;

The condition of the contract units;

The owner's record of compliance with obligations under the HAP contract and lease(s);

Whether the location of the units continues to support the goals of deconcentrating poverty and expanding housing opportunities; and

Whether the funding could be used more appropriately for tenant-based assistance.

### ***Termination by HRA [24 CFR 983.205(c) and FR Notice 1/18/17]***

The HAP contract must provide that the term of the HRA's contractual commitment is subject to the availability of sufficient appropriated funding as determined by HUD or by the HRA in accordance with HUD instructions. For these purposes, sufficient funding means the availability of appropriations, and of funding under the ACC from such appropriations, to make full payment of housing assistance payments payable to the owner for any contract year in accordance with the terms of the HAP contract.

In times of insufficient funding, HUD requires that HRAs first take all cost-saving measures prior to failing to make payments under existing PBV HAP contracts.

If it is determined that there may not be sufficient funding to continue housing assistance payments for all contract units and for the full term of the HAP contract, the HRA may terminate the HAP contract by notice to the owner. The termination must be implemented in accordance with HUD instructions.

### ***Termination by Owner [24 CFR 983.205(d)]***

If in accordance with program requirements the amount of rent to an owner for any contract unit is reduced below the amount of the rent to owner at the beginning of the HAP contract term, the owner may terminate the HAP contract by giving notice to the HRA. In this case, families living in the contract units must be offered tenant-based assistance.

### **Statutory Notice Requirements: Contract Termination or Expiration [24 CFR 983.206, FR Notice 1/18/17, and Notice PIH 2017-21]**

Not less than one year before the HAP contract terminates, or if the owner refuses to renew the HAP contract, the owner must notify the HRA and assisted tenants of the termination. The notice must be provided in the form prescribed by HUD. If the owner does not give timely notice, the owner must permit the tenants in assisted units to remain in their units for the required notice period with no increase in the tenant portion of their rent, and with no eviction as a result of the owner's inability to collect an increased tenant portion of rent. An owner may renew the terminating contract for a period of time sufficient to give tenants one-year advance notice under such terms as HUD may require.

Upon termination or expiration of the contract, a family living at the property is entitled to receive a tenant-based voucher. Tenant-based assistance would not begin until the owner's required notice period ends. The HRA must provide the family with a voucher and the family must also be given the option by the HRA and owner to remain in their unit with HCV tenant-based assistance as long as the unit complies with inspection and rent reasonableness requirements. The family must pay their total tenant payment (TTP) and any additional amount if the gross rent exceeds the applicable payment standard. The family has the right to remain in the project as long as the units are used for rental housing and are otherwise eligible for HCV assistance. The owner may not terminate the tenancy of a family that exercises its right to remain except for serious or repeated lease violations or other good cause. Families that receive a tenant-based voucher at the expiration or termination of the PBV HAP contract are not new admissions to the HRA HCV tenant-based program and are not subject to income eligibility requirements or any other admission requirements. If the family chooses to remain in their unit with tenant-based assistance, the family may do so regardless of whether the family share would initially exceed 40 percent of the family's adjusted monthly income.

### **Remedies for HQS Violations [24 CFR 983.208(b)]**

The HRA may not make any HAP payment to the owner for a contract unit during any period in which the unit does not comply with HQS. If the HRA determines that a contract does not comply with HQS, the HRA may exercise any of its remedies under the HAP contract, for any or all of the contract units. Available remedies include termination of housing assistance payments, abatement or reduction of housing assistance payments, reduction of contract units, and termination of the HAP contract.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will abate and terminate PBV HAP contracts for non-compliance with HQS in accordance with the policies used in the tenant-based voucher program. These policies are contained in Section 8-II.G., Enforcing Owner Compliance.



## **17-V.C. AMENDMENTS TO THE HAP CONTRACT**

### **Substitution of Contract Units [24 CFR 983.207(a)]**

At the HRA's discretion and subject to all PBV requirements, the HAP contract may be amended to substitute a different unit with the same number of bedrooms in the same project for a previously covered contract unit. Before any such substitution can take place, the HRA must inspect the proposed unit and determine the reasonable rent for the unit.

### **Addition of Contract Units [FR Notice 1/18/17 and Notice PIH 2017-21]**

The HRA and owner may amend the HAP contract to add additional PBV contract units in projects that already have a HAP contract without having to fulfill the selection requirements found at 24 CFR 983.51(b) for those additional PBV units, regardless of when the HAP contract was signed. The additional PBV units, however, are still subject to the PBV program cap and individual project caps. Prior to attaching additional units without competition, the HRA must submit to the local field office information outlined in FR Notice 1/18/17. The HRA must also detail in the administrative plan their intent to add PBV units and the rationale for adding units to the specific PBV project.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will add units to the contract on a case-by-case basis to ensure the availability of affordable housing as long as the addition of units does not exceed allowable project caps.HRA

## **17-V.D. HAP CONTRACT YEAR, ANNIVERSARY AND EXPIRATION DATES [24 CFR 983.207(b) and 983.302(e)]**

The HAP contract year is the period of 12 calendar months preceding each annual anniversary of the HAP contract during the HAP contract term. The initial contract year is calculated from the first day of the first calendar month of the HAP contract term.

The annual anniversary of the HAP contract is the first day of the first calendar month after the end of the preceding contract year.

There is a single annual anniversary and expiration date for all units under a particular HAP contract, even in cases where contract units are placed under the HAP contract in stages (on different dates) or units are added by amendment. The anniversary and expiration dates for all units coincide with the dates for the contract units that were originally placed under contract.

## **17-V.E. OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE HAP CONTRACT [24 CFR 983.210]**

When the owner executes the HAP contract s/he certifies that at such execution and at all times during the term of the HAP contract:

- All contract units are in good condition and the owner is maintaining the premises and contract units in accordance with HQS;
- The owner is providing all services, maintenance, equipment and utilities as agreed to under the HAP contract and the leases;
- Each contract unit for which the owner is receiving HAP, is leased to an eligible family referred by the HRA, and the lease is in accordance with the HAP contract and HUD requirements;
- To the best of the owner's knowledge the family resides in the contract unit for which the owner is receiving HAP, and the unit is the family's only residence;
- The owner (including a principal or other interested party) is not the spouse, parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of a family residing in a contract unit;
- The amount of the HAP the owner is receiving is correct under the HAP contract;
- The rent for contract units does not exceed rents charged by the owner for comparable unassisted units;
- Except for HAP and tenant rent, the owner has not received and will not receive any other payment or consideration for rental of the contract unit;
- The family does not own or have any interest in the contract unit (does not apply to family's membership in a cooperative); and
- Repair work on the project selected as an existing project that is performed after HAP execution within such post-execution period as specified by HUD may constitute development activity, and if determined to be development activity, the repair work undertaken shall be in compliance with Davis-Bacon wage requirements.

## **17-V.F. ADDITIONAL HAP REQUIREMENTS**

### **Housing Quality and Design Requirements [24 CFR 983.101(e) and 983.208(a)]**

The owner is required to maintain and operate the contract units and premises in accordance with HQS, including performance of ordinary and extraordinary maintenance. The owner must provide all the services, maintenance, equipment, and utilities specified in the HAP contract with the HRA and in the lease with each assisted family. In addition, maintenance, replacement and redecoration must be in accordance with the standard practice for the building as established by the owner.

The HRA may elect to establish additional requirements for quality, architecture, or design of PBV housing. Any such additional requirements must be specified in the Agreement to enter into a HAP contract and the HAP contract. These requirements must be in addition to, not in place of, compliance with HQS.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will identify the need for any special features on a case-by-case basis depending on the intended occupancy of the PBV project. The HRA will specify any special design standards or additional requirements in the invitation for PBV proposals, the agreement to enter into HAP contract, and the HAP contract.

### **Vacancy Payments [24 CFR 983.352(b)]**

At the discretion of the HRA, the HAP contract may provide for vacancy payments to the owner for a HRA-determined period of vacancy extending from the beginning of the first calendar month after the move-out month for a period not exceeding two full months following the move-out month. The amount of the vacancy payment will be determined by the HRA and cannot exceed the monthly rent to owner under the assisted lease, minus any portion of the rental payment received by the owner (including amounts available from the tenant's security deposit).

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will decide on a case-by-case basis if the HRA will provide vacancy payments to the owner. The HAP contract with the owner will contain any such agreement, including the amount of the vacancy payment and the period for which the owner will qualify for these payments.



## **PART VI: SELECTION OF PBV PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS**

### **17-VI.A. OVERVIEW**

Many of the provisions of the tenant-based voucher regulations [24 CFR 982] also apply to the PBV program. This includes requirements related to determining eligibility and selecting applicants from the waiting list. Even with these similarities, there are requirements that are unique to the PBV program. This part describes the requirements and policies related to eligibility and admission to the PBV program.

### **17-VI.B. ELIGIBILITY FOR PBV ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 983.251(a) and (b)]**

The HRA may select families for the PBV program from those who are participants in the HRA's tenant-based voucher program and from those who have applied for admission to the voucher program. For voucher participants, eligibility was determined at original admission to the voucher program and does not need to be redetermined at the commencement of PBV assistance. For all others, eligibility for admission must be determined at the commencement of PBV assistance.

Applicants for PBV assistance must meet the same eligibility requirements as applicants for the tenant-based voucher program. Applicants must qualify as a family as defined by HUD and the HRA, have income at or below HUD-specified income limits, and qualify on the basis of citizenship or the eligible immigration status of family members [24 CFR 982.201(a) and 24 CFR 983.2(a)]. In addition, an applicant family must provide social security information for family members [24 CFR 5.216 and 5.218] and consent to the HRA's collection and use of family information regarding income, expenses, and family composition [24 CFR 5.230]. The HRA may also not approve a tenancy if the owner (including a principal or other interested party) of the unit is the parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of the family, unless needed as a reasonable accommodation. An applicant family must also meet HUD requirements related to current or past criminal activity.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will determine an applicant family's eligibility for the PBV program in accordance with the policies in Chapter 3.

**In-Place Families [24 CFR 983.251(b)]**

An eligible family residing in a proposed PBV contract unit on the date the proposal is selected by the HRA is considered an “in-place family.” These families are afforded protection from displacement under the PBV rule. If a unit to be placed under contract (either an existing unit or a unit requiring rehabilitation) is occupied by an eligible family on the date the proposal is selected, the in-place family must be placed on the HRA’s waiting list. Once the family’s continued eligibility is determined (the HRA may deny assistance to an in-place family for the grounds specified in 24 CFR 982.552 and 982.553), the family must be given an absolute selection preference and the HRA must refer these families to the project owner for an appropriately sized PBV unit in the project. Admission of eligible in-place families is not subject to income targeting requirements.

This regulatory protection from displacement does not apply to families that are not eligible to participate in the program on the proposal selection date.

## **17-VLC. ORGANIZATION OF THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 983.251(c)]**

The HRA may establish a separate waiting list for PBV units or it may use the same waiting list for both tenant-based and project-based assistance. The HRA may also merge the PBV waiting list with a waiting list for other assisted housing programs offered by the HRA. If the HRA chooses to offer a separate waiting list for PBV assistance, the HRA must offer to place applicants who are listed on the tenant-based waiting list on the waiting list for PBV assistance.

If a HRA decides to establish a separate PBV waiting list, the HRA may use a single waiting list for the HRA's whole PBV program, or it may establish separate waiting lists for PBV units in particular projects or buildings or for sets of such units.

### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will establish and manage separate waiting lists for individual projects or buildings that are receiving PBV assistance. The HRA currently has waiting lists for the following PBV projects:

Eastwood Apartments, 1-bedroom units

Eastwood Apartments, 2-bedroom units

Swisshelm Village Apartments, 2-bedroom units

Swisshelm Village Apartments, 3-bedroom units

Westwood Village Apartments, 2-bedroom units

## **17-VLD. SELECTION FROM THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 983.251(c)]**

Applicants who will occupy units with PBV assistance must be selected from the HRA's waiting list. The HRA may establish selection criteria or preferences for occupancy of particular PBV units. The HRA may place families referred by the PBV owner on its PBV waiting list.

### **Income Targeting [24 CFR 983.251(c)(6)]**

At least 75 percent of the families admitted to the HRA's tenant-based and project-based voucher programs during the HRA fiscal year from the waiting list must be extremely low-income families. The income targeting requirement applies to the total of admissions to both programs.

### **Units with Accessibility Features [24 CFR 983.251(c)(7)]**

When selecting families to occupy PBV units that have special accessibility features for persons with disabilities, the HRA must first refer families who require such features to the owner.

### **Preferences [24 CFR 983.251(d), FR Notice 11/24/08]**

The HRA may use the same selection preferences that are used for the tenant-based voucher program, establish selection criteria or preferences for the PBV program as a whole, or for occupancy of particular PBV developments or units. The HRA must provide an absolute selection preference for eligible in-place families as described in Section 17-VI.B. above.

The HRA may establish a selection preference for families who qualify for voluntary services, including disability-specific services, offered in conjunction with assisted units, provided that

preference is consistent with the HRA plan. The HRA may not, however, grant a preference to a person with a specific disability [FR Notice 1/18/17].

In advertising such a project, the owner may advertise the project as offering services for a particular type of disability; however, the project must be open to all otherwise eligible disabled persons who may benefit from services provided in the project. In these projects, disabled residents may not be required to accept the particular services offered as a condition of occupancy.

If the HRA has projects with “excepted units” for elderly families or supportive services, the HRA must give preference to such families when referring families to these units [24 CFR 983.261(b); FR Notice 1/18/17].

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will provide a selection preference when required by the regulation (e.g., eligible in-place families, elderly families or units with supportive services, or mobility impaired persons for accessible units). The following additional preferences have been established for the following projects, buildings or sets of units:

Swisshelm Village Apartments 1 LP, 316 Laudenbach Court, St. Cloud, MN 56301

2, 3-bedroom units are designated MARIF

2, 2-bedroom units are designated MARIF

Westwood Village Apartments 1 LP, 770 Savanna Ave., St. Cloud, MN 56303

4, 2-bedroom units are designated MARIF

#### Minnesota Families Affordable Rental Investment Fund Program (MARIF)

**MARIF Eligibility:** To be eligible for occupancy in a MARIF unit, an applicant must be a current or recent Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) participant or have a household income at the time of initial occupancy of no more than 30 percent of metro median income as determined by HUD.

Recent MFIP participant is defined as a family who left MFIP for reasons other than disqualification from MFIP due to fraud no more than 24 months prior to the family’s application for tenancy in a MARIF unit, and whose income at the time of application is equal to or less than 160 percent of the federal poverty level of the family’s size.



## **17-VLE. OFFER OF PBV ASSISTANCE**

### **Refusal of Offer [24 CFR 983.251(e)(3)]**

The HRA is prohibited from taking any of the following actions against a family who has applied for, received, or refused an offer of PBV assistance:

- Refuse to list the applicant on the waiting list for tenant-based voucher assistance;
- Deny any admission preference for which the applicant qualifies;
- Change the applicant's place on the waiting list based on preference, date, and time of application, or other factors affecting selection under the HRA's selection policy;
- Remove the applicant from the tenant-based voucher waiting list.

### **Disapproval by Landlord [24 CFR 983.251(e)(2)]**

If a PBV owner rejects a family for admission to the owner's units, such rejection may not affect the family's position on the tenant-based voucher waiting list.

### **Acceptance of Offer [24 CFR 983.252]**

#### ***Family Briefing***

When a family accepts an offer for PBV assistance, the HRA must give the family an oral briefing. The briefing must include information on how the program works and the responsibilities of the family and owner. In addition to the oral briefing, the HRA must provide a briefing packet that explains how the HRA determines the total tenant payment for a family, the family obligations under the program, and applicable fair housing information.

#### ***Persons with Disabilities***

If an applicant family's head or spouse is disabled, the HRA must assure effective communication, in accordance with 24 CFR 8.6, in conducting the oral briefing and in providing the written information packet. This may include making alternative formats available (see Chapter 2). In addition, the HRA must have a mechanism for referring a family that includes a member with a mobility impairment to an appropriate accessible PBV unit.

#### ***Persons with Limited English Proficiency***

The HRA should take reasonable steps to assure meaningful access by persons with limited English proficiency in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 13166 (see Chapter 2).

## **17-VI.F. OWNER SELECTION OF TENANTS**

The owner is responsible for developing written tenant selection procedures that are consistent with the purpose of improving housing opportunities for very low-income families and reasonably related to program eligibility and an applicant's ability to fulfill their obligations under the lease. An owner must promptly notify in writing any rejected applicant of the grounds for any rejection [24 CFR 983.253(a)(2) and (a)(3)].

### **Leasing [24 CFR 983.253(a)]**

During the term of the HAP contract, the owner must lease contract units to eligible families that are selected and referred by the HRA from the HRA's waiting list. The contract unit leased to the family must be the appropriate size unit for the size of the family, based on the HRA's subsidy standards.

### **Filling Vacancies [24 CFR 983.254(a)]**

The owner must promptly notify the HRA of any vacancy or expected vacancy in a contract unit. After receiving such notice, the HRA must make every reasonable effort to promptly refer a sufficient number of families for the owner to fill such vacancies. The HRA and the owner must make reasonable efforts to minimize the likelihood and length of any vacancy.

#### HRA Policy

The owner must notify the HRA in writing (mail, fax, or email) within five business days of learning about any vacancy or expected vacancy.

The HRA will make every reasonable effort to refer families to the owner within 10 business days of receiving such notice from the owner.

### **Reduction in HAP Contract Units Due to Vacancies [24 CFR 983.254(b)]**

If any contract units have been vacant for 120 or more days since owner notice of the vacancy, the HRA may give notice to the owner amending the HAP contract to reduce the number of contract units by subtracting the number of contract units (according to the bedroom size) that have been vacant for this period.

#### HRA Policy

If any contract units have been vacant for 120 days, the HRA will give notice to the owner that the HAP contract will be amended to reduce the number of contract units that have been vacant for this period. The HRA will provide the notice to the owner within 10 business days of the 120<sup>th</sup> day of the vacancy.

The amendment to the HAP contract will be effective the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month following the date of the HRA's notice.

## **17-VLG. TENANT SCREENING [24 CFR 983.255]**

### **HRA Responsibility**

The HRA is not responsible or liable to the owner or any other person for the family's behavior or suitability for tenancy. However, the HRA may opt to screen applicants for family behavior or suitability for tenancy and may deny applicants based on such screening.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will not conduct screening to determine a PBV applicant family's suitability for tenancy.

The HRA must provide the owner with an applicant family's current and prior address (as shown in HRA records) and the name and address (if known by the HRA) of the family's current landlord and any prior landlords.

In addition, the HRA may offer the owner other information the HRA may have about a family, including information about the tenancy history of family members or about drug trafficking and criminal activity by family members. The HRA must provide applicant families a description of the HRA policy on providing information to owners, and the HRA must give the same types of information to all owners.

The HRA may not disclose to the owner any confidential information provided in response to a request for documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking except at the written request or with the written consent of the individual providing the documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(a)(4)].

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will inform owners of their responsibility to screen prospective tenants, and will provide owners with the required known name and address information, at the time of the turnover HQS inspection or before. The HRA will not provide any additional information to the owner, such as tenancy history, criminal history, etc.

### **Owner Responsibility**

The owner is responsible for screening and selection of the family to occupy the owner's unit. When screening families the owner may consider a family's background with respect to the following factors:

- Payment of rent and utility bills;
- Caring for a unit and premises;
- Respecting the rights of other residents to the peaceful enjoyment of their housing;
- Drug-related criminal activity or other criminal activity that is a threat to the health, safety, or property of others; and
- Compliance with other essential conditions of tenancy.



## **PART VII: OCCUPANCY**

### **17-VII.A. OVERVIEW**

After an applicant has been selected from the waiting list, determined eligible by the HRA, referred to an owner and determined suitable by the owner, the family will sign the lease and occupancy of the unit will begin.

### **17-VII.B. LEASE [24 CFR 983.256]**

The tenant must have legal capacity to enter a lease under state and local law. *Legal capacity* means that the tenant is bound by the terms of the lease and may enforce the terms of the lease against the owner.

#### **Form of Lease [24 CFR 983.256(b)]**

The tenant and the owner must enter into a written lease agreement that is signed by both parties. If an owner uses a standard lease form for rental units to unassisted tenants in the locality or premises, the same lease must be used for assisted tenants, except that the lease must include a HUD-required tenancy addendum. The tenancy addendum must include, word-for-word, all provisions required by HUD.

If the owner does not use a standard lease form for rental to unassisted tenants, the owner may use another form of lease, such as a HRA model lease.

The HRA may review the owner's lease form to determine if the lease complies with state and local law. If the HRA determines that the lease does not comply with state or local law, the HRA may decline to approve the tenancy.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will not review the owner's lease for compliance with state or local law.

#### **Lease Requirements [24 CFR 983.256(c)]**

The lease for a PBV unit must specify all of the following information:

- The names of the owner and the tenant;
- The unit rented (address, apartment number, if any, and any other information needed to identify the leased contract unit);
- The term of the lease (initial term and any provision for renewal);
- The amount of the tenant rent to owner, which is subject to change during the term of the lease in accordance with HUD requirements;
- A specification of the services, maintenance, equipment, and utilities that will be provide by the owner; and
- The amount of any charges for food, furniture, or supportive services.

**Tenancy Addendum [24 CFR 983.256(d)]**

The tenancy addendum in the lease must state:

- The program tenancy requirements;
- The composition of the household as approved by the HRA (the names of family members and any HRA-approved live-in aide);
- All provisions in the HUD-required tenancy addendum must be included in the lease. The terms of the tenancy addendum prevail over other provisions of the lease.

**Initial Term and Lease Renewal [24 CFR 983.256(f)]**

The initial lease term must be for at least one year. The lease must provide for automatic renewal after the initial term of the lease in either successive definitive terms (e.g. month-to-month or year-to-year) or an automatic indefinite extension of the lease term. For automatic indefinite extension of the lease term, the lease terminates if any of the following occur:

- The owner terminates the lease for good cause
- The tenant terminates the lease
- The owner and tenant agree to terminate the lease
- The HRA terminates the HAP contract
- The HRA terminates assistance for the family

**Changes in the Lease [24 CFR 983.256(e)]**

If the tenant and owner agree to any change in the lease, the change must be in writing, and the owner must immediately give the HRA a copy of all changes.

The owner must notify the HRA in advance of any proposed change in the lease regarding the allocation of tenant and owner responsibilities for utilities. Such changes may only be made if approved by the HRA and in accordance with the terms of the lease relating to its amendment. The HRA must redetermine reasonable rent, in accordance with program requirements, based on any change in the allocation of the responsibility for utilities between the owner and the tenant. The redetermined reasonable rent will be used in calculation of the rent to owner from the effective date of the change.

### **Owner Termination of Tenancy [24 CFR 983.257]**

With two exceptions, the owner of a PBV unit may terminate tenancy for the same reasons an owner may in the tenant-based voucher program (see Section 12-III.B. and 24 CFR 982.310). In the PBV program, terminating tenancy for “good cause” does not include doing so for a business or economic reason, or a desire to use the unit for personal or family use or other non-residential purpose.

### ***Tenant Absence from the Unit [24 CFR 983.256(g) and 982.312(a)]***

The lease may specify a maximum period of family absence from the unit that may be shorter than the maximum period permitted by HRA policy. According to program requirements, the family’s assistance must be terminated if they are absent from the unit for more than 180 consecutive days. HRA termination of assistance actions due to family absence from the unit are subject to 24 CFR 981.312, except that the unit is not terminated from the HAP contract if the family is absent for longer than the maximum period permitted.

### **Continuation of Housing Assistance Payments [24 CFR 982.258]**

Housing assistance payments shall continue until the tenant rent equals the rent to owner. The cessation of housing assistance payments at such point will not affect the family's other rights under its lease, nor will such cessation preclude the resumption of payments as a result of later changes in income, rents, or other relevant circumstances if such changes occur within 180 days following the date of the last housing assistance payment by the HRA. After the 180-day period, the unit shall be removed from the HAP contract pursuant to 24 CFR 983.211.

#### HRA Policy

If a participating family receiving zero assistance experiences a change in circumstances that would result in a HAP payment to the owner, the family must notify the HRA of the change and request an interim reexamination before the expiration of the 180-day period.

## **Security Deposits [24 CFR 983.259]**

The owner may collect a security deposit from the tenant. The HRA may prohibit security deposits in excess of private market practice, or in excess of amounts charged by the owner to unassisted tenants.

### HRA Policy

The HRA prohibits the owner from collecting security deposits in excess of amounts charged by the owner to unassisted tenants.

When the tenant moves out of a contract unit, the owner, subject to state and local law, may use the security deposit, including any interest on the deposit, in accordance with the lease, as reimbursement for any unpaid tenant rent, damages to the unit, or other amounts owed by the tenant under the lease.

The owner must give the tenant a written list of all items charged against the security deposit and the amount of each item. After deducting the amount used to reimburse the owner, the owner must promptly refund the full amount of the balance to the tenant.

If the security deposit does not cover the amount owed by the tenant under the lease, the owner may seek to collect the balance from the tenant. The HRA has no liability or responsibility for payment of any amount owed by the family to the owner.



## **17-VII.C. MOVES**

### **Overcrowded, Under-Occupied, and Accessible Units [24 CFR 983.260]**

If the HRA determines that a family is occupying a wrong size unit, based on the HRA's subsidy standards, or a unit with accessibility features that the family does not require, and the unit is needed by a family that does require the features, the HRA must promptly notify the family and the owner of this determination, and the HRA must offer the family the opportunity to receive continued housing assistance in another unit.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will notify the family and the owner of the family's need to move based on the occupancy of a wrong-size or accessible unit within 10 business days of the HRA's determination. The HRA will offer the family the following types of continued assistance in the following order, based on the availability of assistance:

PBV assistance in the same building or project;

PBV assistance in another project; and

Tenant-based voucher assistance.

If the HRA offers the family a tenant-based voucher, the HRA must terminate the housing assistance payments for a wrong-sized or accessible unit at the earlier of the expiration of the term of the family's voucher (including any extension granted by the HRA) or the date upon which the family vacates the unit. If the family does not move out of the wrong-sized unit or accessible unit by the expiration of the term of the family's voucher, the HRA must remove the unit from the HAP contract.

If the HRA offers the family another form of assistance that is not a tenant-based voucher, and the family does not accept the offer, does not move out of the PBV unit within a reasonable time as determined by the HRA, or both, the HRA must terminate the housing assistance payments for the unit at the expiration of a reasonable period as determined by the HRA and remove the unit from the HAP contract.

#### HRA Policy

When the HRA offers a family another form of assistance that is not a tenant-based voucher, the family will be given 30 days from the date of the offer to accept the offer and move out of the PBV unit. If the family does not move out within this 30-day time frame, the HRA will terminate the housing assistance payments at the expiration of this 30-day period.

The HRA may make exceptions to this 30-day period if needed for reasons beyond the family's control such as death, serious illness, or other medical emergency of a family member.

**Family Right to Move [24 CFR 983.261]**

The family may terminate the lease at any time after the first year of occupancy. The family must give advance written notice to the owner in accordance with the lease and provide a copy of such notice to the HRA. If the family wishes to move with continued tenant-based assistance, the family must contact the HRA to request the rental assistance prior to providing notice to terminate the lease.

If the family terminates the lease in accordance with these requirements, the HRA is required to offer the family the opportunity for continued tenant-based assistance, in the form of a voucher or other comparable tenant-based rental assistance. If voucher or other comparable tenant-based assistance is not immediately available upon termination of the family's lease in the PBV unit, the HRA must give the family priority to receive the next available opportunity for continued tenant-based assistance.

If the family terminates the assisted lease before the end of the first year, the family relinquishes the opportunity for continued tenant-based assistance.

## **Emergency Transfers under VAWA [Notice PIH 2017-08]**

Except where special consideration is needed for the project-based voucher program, the HRA will follow VAWA policies as outlined in Chapter 16 Part IX of this administrative plan, including using the Emergency Transfer Plan as the basis for PBV transfers under VAWA (Exhibit 16-4).

HUD requires that the HRA include policies that address when a victim has been living in a unit for less than a year or when a victim seeks to move sooner than a tenant-based voucher is available.

### HRA Policy

When the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking has lived in the unit for less than one year, the HRA will provide several options for continued assistance.

The HRA will first try to transfer the participant to another PBV unit in the same development or transfer to a different development where the HRA has PBV units. The HRA will expedite the administrative processes in this case in an effort to conduct the transfer as quickly as possible.

If no units are available for an internal transfer, or if there is reasonable cause to believe that such a transfer would put the victim in jeopardy, the participant may receive continued assistance through an external transfer to either tenant-based rental assistance (HCV) or assistance in the HRA's public housing program. Such a decision will be made by the HRA based on the availability of tenant-based vouchers and/or vacancies in public housing units. Such families must be selected from the waiting list for the applicable program. The HRA has adopted a waiting list preference for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in both its HCV and public housing programs in order to expedite this process. See Section 4-III.C. of this administrative plan.

If a victim wishes to move after a year of occupancy in the unit, but no tenant-based vouchers are available, the HRA will offer the participant an internal transfer to another PBV unit in the same development or a transfer to a different development where the HRA has PBV units. The HRA will expedite the administrative processes in this case in an effort to conduct the transfer as quickly as possible.

If no units are available for an internal transfer, or if there is reasonable cause to believe that such a transfer would put the victim in jeopardy, the participant may receive continued assistance through an external transfer to the HRA's public housing program. The HRA has adopted a waiting list preference for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking as part of the public housing ACOP in order to expedite this process.

#### **17-VII.D. EXCEPTIONS TO THE OCCUPANCY CAP [24 CFR 983.262]**

As of April 17, 2018, the HRA may not pay housing assistance under a PBV HAP contract for more than the greater of 25 units or 25 percent of the number of dwelling units in a project unless:

- The units are exclusively for elderly families
- The units are for households eligible for supportive services available to all families receiving PBV assistance in the project

If the project is located in a census tract with a poverty rate of 20 percent or less, as determined in the most recent American Community Survey Five-Year estimates, the project cap is the greater of 25 units or 40 percent (instead of 25 percent) of the units in the project [FR Notice 7/14/17].

If a family at the time of initial tenancy is receiving and while the resident of an excepted unit has received Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) supportive services or any other service as defined by the HRA and successfully completes the FSS contract of participation or the supportive services requirement, the unit continues to count as an excepted unit for as long as the family resides in the unit. However, if the FSS family fails to successfully complete the FSS contract of participation or supportive services objective and consequently is no longer eligible for the supportive services, the family must vacate the unit within a reasonable period of time established by the HRA, and the HRA shall cease paying HAP on behalf of the family.

Further, when a family (or remaining members of a family) residing in an excepted unit no longer meets the criteria for a “qualifying family” because the family is no longer an elderly family due to a change in family composition, the HRA has the discretion to allow the family to remain in the excepted unit. If the HRA does not exercise this discretion, the family must vacate the unit within a reasonable period of time established by the HRA, and the HRA must cease paying housing assistance payments on behalf of the non-qualifying family.

Individuals in units with supportive services who choose to no longer participate in a service or who no longer qualify for services they qualified for at the time of initial occupancy cannot subsequently be denied continued housing opportunity because of this changed circumstance. A HRA or owner cannot determine that a participant’s needs exceed the level of care offered by qualifying services or require that individuals be transitioned to different projects based on service needs.

If the family fails to vacate the unit within the established time, the unit must be removed from the HAP contract unless the project is partially assisted, and it is possible for the HAP contract to be amended to substitute a different unit in the building in accordance with program requirements; or the owner terminates the lease and evicts the family. The housing assistance payments for a family residing in an excepted unit that is not in compliance with its family obligations to comply with supportive services requirements must be terminated by the HRA.

The HRA may allow a family that initially qualified for occupancy of an excepted unit based on elderly family status to continue to reside in a unit, where through circumstances beyond the control of the family (e.g., death of the elderly family member or long-term or permanent hospitalization or nursing care), the elderly family member no longer resides in the unit. In this case, the unit may continue to be counted as an excepted unit for as long as the family resides in that unit. Once the family vacates the unit, in order to continue as an excepted unit under the HAP contract, the unit must be made available to and occupied by a qualified family.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will not provide PBV assistance for excepted units.



## **PART VIII: DETERMINING RENT TO OWNER**

### **17-VIII.A. OVERVIEW**

The amount of the initial rent to an owner of units receiving PBV assistance is established at the beginning of the HAP contract term. Although for rehabilitated or newly constructed housing, the agreement to enter into HAP Contract (Agreement) states the estimated amount of the initial rent to owner, the actual amount of the initial rent to owner is established at the beginning of the HAP contract term.

During the term of the HAP contract, the rent to owner is redetermined at the owner's request in accordance with program requirements, and at such time that there is a five percent or greater decrease in the published FMR.

### **17-VIII.B. RENT LIMITS [24 CFR 983.301]**

Except for certain tax credit units (discussed below), the rent to owner must not exceed the lowest of the following amounts:

- An amount determined by the HRA, not to exceed 110 percent of the applicable fair market rent (or any HUD-approved exception payment standard) for the unit bedroom size minus any utility allowance;
- The reasonable rent; or
- The rent requested by the owner.

#### **Certain Tax Credit Units [24 CFR 983.301(c)]**

For certain tax credit units, the rent limits are determined differently than for other PBV units. Different limits apply to contract units that meet all of the following criteria:

- The contract unit receives a low-income housing tax credit under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
- The contract unit is not located in a qualified census tract;
- There are comparable tax credit units of the same bedroom size as the contract unit in the same project, and the comparable tax credit units do not have any form of rental assistance other than the tax credit; and
- The tax credit rent exceeds 110 percent of the fair market rent or any approved exception payment standard;

For contract units that meet all of these criteria, the rent to owner must not exceed the lowest of:

- The tax credit rent minus any utility allowance;
- The reasonable rent; or
- The rent requested by the owner.

## ***Definitions***

A *qualified census tract* is any census tract (or equivalent geographic area defined by the Bureau of the Census) in which at least 50 percent of households have an income of less than 60 percent of Area Median Gross Income (AMGI), or where the poverty rate is at least 25 percent and where the census tract is designated as a qualified census tract by HUD.

*Tax credit rent* is the rent charged for comparable units of the same bedroom size in the project that also receive the low-income housing tax credit but do not have any additional rental assistance (e.g., tenant-based voucher assistance).

## **Reasonable Rent [24 CFR 983.301(e) and 983.302(c)(2)]**

The HRA must determine reasonable rent in accordance with 24 CFR 983.303. The rent to owner for each contract unit may at no time exceed the reasonable rent, except in cases where the HRA has elected within the HAP contract not to reduce rents below the initial rent to owner and, upon redetermination of the rent to owner, the reasonable rent would result in a rent below the initial rent. However, the rent to owner must be reduced in the following cases:

- To correct errors in calculations in accordance with HUD requirements
- If additional housing assistance has been combined with PBV assistance after the execution of the initial HAP contract and a rent decrease is required pursuant to 24 CFR 983.55
- If a decrease in rent to owner is required based on changes in the allocation of the responsibility for utilities between owner and tenant

If the HRA has not elected within the HAP contract to establish the initial rent to owner as the rent floor, the rent to owner shall not at any time exceed the reasonable rent.

### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will elect within the HAP contract not to reduce rents below the initial level, with the exception of circumstances listed in 24 CFR 983.302(c)(2). If, upon redetermination of the rent to owner, the reasonable rent would result in a rent below the initial rent, the HRA will use the higher initial rent to owner amount.



### **Use of FMRs, Exception Payment Standards, and Utility Allowances [24 CFR 983.301(f)]**

When determining the initial rent to owner, the HRA must use the most recently published FMR in effect and the utility allowance schedule in effect at execution of the HAP contract. When redetermining the rent to owner, the HRA must use the most recently published FMR and the utility allowance schedule in effect at the time of redetermination. At its discretion, the HRA may for initial rent, use the amounts in effect at any time during the 30-day period immediately before the beginning date of the HAP contract, or for redeterminations of rent, the 30-day period immediately before the redetermination date.

Any HUD-approved exception payment standard amount under the tenant-based voucher program also applies to the project-based voucher program. HUD will not approve a different exception payment stand amount for use in the PBV program.

Likewise, the HRA may not establish or apply different utility allowance amounts for the PBV program. The same utility allowance schedule applies to both the tenant-based and project-based voucher programs.

#### HRA Policy

Upon written request by the owner, the HRA will consider using the FMR or utility allowances in effect during the 30-day period before the start date of the HAP, or redetermination of rent. The owner must explain the need to use the previous FMRs or utility allowances and include documentation in support of the request. The HRA will review and make a decision based on the circumstances and merit of each request.

In addition to considering a written request from an owner, the HRA may decide to use the FMR or utility allowances in effect during the 30-day period before the start date of the HAP, or redetermination of rent, if the HRA determines it is necessary due to HRA budgetary constraints.

### **Use of Small Area FMRs (SAFMRs) [24 CFR 888.113(h)]**

While small area FMRs (SAFMRs) do not apply to PBV projects, HRAs that operate a tenant-based program under SAFMRs may apply SAFMRs to all future PBV HAP contracts. If the HRA adopts this policy, it must apply to all future PBV projects and the HRA's entire jurisdiction. The HRA and owner may not subsequently choose to revert back to use of the FMRs once the SAFMRs have been adopted, even if the HRA subsequently changes its policy.

Further, the HRA may apply SAFMRs to current PBV projects where the notice of owner selection was made on or before the effective date of HRA implementation, provided the owner is willing to mutually agree to doing so and the application is prospective. The HRA and owner may not subsequently choose to revert back to use of the FMRs once the SAFMRs have been adopted, even if the HRA subsequently changes its policy. If rents increase as a result of the use of SAFMRs, the rent increase may not be effective until the first anniversary of the HAP contract.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will not apply SAFMRs to the HRA's PBV program.

## **Redetermination of Rent [24 CFR 983.302]**

The HRA must redetermine the rent to owner upon the owner's request or when there is a 10 percent or greater decrease in the published FMR.

### ***Rent Increase***

If an owner wishes to request an increase in the rent to owner from the HRA, it must be requested at the annual anniversary of the HAP contract (see Section 17-V.D.). The request must be in writing and in the form and manner required by the HRA. The HRA may only make rent increases in accordance with the rent limits described previously. There are no provisions in the PBV program for special adjustments (e.g., adjustments that reflect increases in the actual and necessary expenses of owning and maintaining the units which have resulted from substantial general increases in real property taxes, utility rates, or similar costs).

#### HRA Policy

An owner's request for a rent increase must be submitted to the HRA 60 days prior to the anniversary date of the HAP contract and must include the new rent amount the owner is proposing.

The HRA may not approve and the owner may not receive any increase of rent to owner until and unless the owner has complied with requirements of the HAP contract, including compliance with HQS. The owner may not receive any retroactive increase of rent for any period of noncompliance.

### ***Rent Decrease***

If there is a decrease in the rent to owner, as established in accordance with program requirements such as a change in the FMR or exception payment standard, or reasonable rent amount, the rent to owner must be decreased regardless of whether the owner requested a rent adjustment, except where the HRA has elected within the HAP contract to not reduce rents below the initial rent under the initial HAP contract.

### ***Notice of Rent Change***

The rent to owner is redetermined by written notice by the HRA to the owner specifying the amount of the redetermined rent. The HRA notice of rent adjustment constitutes an amendment of the rent to owner specified in the HAP contract. The adjusted amount of rent to owner applies for the period of 12 calendar months from the annual anniversary of the HAP contract.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will provide the owner with at least 30 days written notice of any change in the amount of rent to owner.

## **HRA-Owned Units [24 CFR 983.301(g)]**

For HRA-owned PBV units, the initial rent to owner and the annual redetermination of rent at the anniversary of the HAP contract are determined by the independent entity approved by HUD. The HRA must use the rent to owner established by the independent entity.

### **17-VIII.C. REASONABLE RENT [24 CFR 983.303]**

At the time the initial rent is established and all times during the term of the HAP contract, the rent to owner for a contract unit may not exceed the reasonable rent for the unit as determined by the HRA, except where the HRA has elected within the HAP contract to not reduce rents below the initial rent under the initial HAP contract.

#### **When Rent Reasonable Determinations Are Required**

The HRA must redetermine the reasonable rent for a unit receiving PBV assistance whenever any of the following occur:

- There is a 10 percent or greater decrease in the published FMR in effect 60 days before the contract anniversary (for the unit sizes specified in the HAP contract) as compared with the FMR that was in effect one year before the contract anniversary date;
- The HRA approves a change in the allocation of responsibility for utilities between the owner and the tenant;
- The HAP contract is amended to substitute a different contract unit in the same building or project; or
- There is any other change that may substantially affect the reasonable rent.

#### **How to Determine Reasonable Rent**

The reasonable rent of a unit receiving PBV assistance must be determined by comparison to rent for other comparable unassisted units. When making this determination, the HRA must consider factors that affect market rent. Such factors include the location, quality, size, type and age of the unit, as well as the amenities, housing services maintenance, and utilities to be provided by the owner.

#### ***Comparability Analysis***

For each unit, the comparability analysis must use at least three comparable units in the private unassisted market. This may include units in the premises or project that is receiving project-based assistance. The analysis must show how the reasonable rent was determined, including major differences between the contract units and comparable unassisted units, and must be retained by the HRA. The comparability analysis may be performed by HRA staff or by another qualified person or entity. Those who conduct these analyses or are involved in determining the housing assistance payment based on the analyses may not have any direct or indirect interest in the property.

#### **HRA-Owned Units**

For HRA-owned units, the amount of the reasonable rent must be determined by an independent agency approved by HUD in accordance with PBV program requirements. The independent entity must provide a copy of the determination of reasonable rent for HRA-owned units to the HRA and to the HUD field office where the project is located.

### **Owner Certification of Reasonable Rent**

By accepting each monthly housing assistance payment, the owner certifies that the rent to owner is not more than rent charged by the owner for other comparable unassisted units in the premises. At any time, the HRA may require the owner to submit information on rents charged by the owner for other units in the premises or elsewhere.

### **17-VIII.D. EFFECT OF OTHER SUBSIDY AND RENT CONTROL**

In addition to the rent limits discussed in Section 17-VIII.B above, other restrictions may limit the amount of rent to owner in a PBV unit. In addition, certain types of subsidized housing are not even eligible to receive PBV assistance (see Section 17-II.D).

#### **Other Subsidy [24 CFR 983.304]**

To comply with HUD subsidy layering requirements, at the discretion of HUD or its designee, a HRA shall reduce the rent to owner because of other governmental subsidies, including tax credits or tax exemptions, grants, or other subsidized funding.

For units receiving assistance under the HOME program, rents may not exceed rent limits as required by that program.

For units in any of the following types of federally subsidized projects, the rent to owner may not exceed the subsidized rent (basic rent) or tax credit rent as determined in accordance with requirements for the applicable federal program:

- An insured or non-insured Section 236 project;
- A formerly insured or non-insured Section 236 project that continues to receive Interest Reduction Payment following a decoupling action;
- A Section 221(d)(3) below market interest rate (BMIR) project;
- A Section 515 project of the Rural Housing Service;
- Any other type of federally subsidized project specified by HUD.

#### ***Combining Subsidy***

Rent to owner may not exceed any limitation required to comply with HUD subsidy layering requirements.

#### **Rent Control [24 CFR 983.305]**

In addition to the rent limits set by PBV program regulations, the amount of rent to owner may also be subject to rent control or other limits under local, state, or federal law.

## **PART IX: PAYMENTS TO OWNER**

### **17-IX.A. HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS [24 CFR 983.351]**

During the term of the HAP contract, the HRA must make housing assistance payments to the owner in accordance with the terms of the HAP contract. During the term of the HAP contract, payments must be made for each month that a contract unit complies with HQS and is leased to and occupied by an eligible family. The housing assistance payment must be paid to the owner on or about the first day of the month for which payment is due, unless the owner and the HRA agree on a later date.

Except for discretionary vacancy payments, the HRA may not make any housing assistance payment to the owner for any month after the month when the family moves out of the unit (even if household goods or property are left in the unit).

The amount of the housing assistance payment by the HRA is the rent to owner minus the tenant rent (total tenant payment minus the utility allowance).

In order to receive housing assistance payments, the owner must comply with all provisions of the HAP contract. Unless the owner complies with all provisions of the HAP contract, the owner does not have a right to receive housing assistance payments.

### **17-IX.B. VACANCY PAYMENTS [24 CFR 983.352]**

If an assisted family moves out of the unit, the owner may keep the housing assistance payment for the calendar month when the family moves out. However, the owner may not keep the payment if the HRA determines that the vacancy is the owner's fault.

#### HRA Policy

If the HRA determines that the owner is responsible for a vacancy and, as a result, is not entitled to keep the housing assistance payment, the HRA will notify the landlord of the amount of housing assistance payment that the owner must repay. The HRA will require the owner to repay the amount owed in accordance with the policies in Section 16-IV.B.

At the discretion of the HRA, the HAP contract may provide for vacancy payments to the owner. The HRA may only make vacancy payments if:

- The owner gives the HRA prompt, written notice certifying that the family has vacated the unit and identifies the date when the family moved out (to the best of the owner's knowledge);
- The owner certifies that the vacancy is not the fault of the owner and that the unit was vacant during the period for which payment is claimed;
- The owner certifies that it has taken every reasonable action to minimize the likelihood and length of vacancy; and
- The owner provides any additional information required and requested by the HRA to verify that the owner is entitled to the vacancy payment.

The owner must submit a request for vacancy payments in the form and manner required by the HRA and must provide any information or substantiation required by the HRA to determine the amount of any vacancy payment.

#### HRA Policy

If an owner's HAP contract calls for vacancy payments to be made, and the owner wishes to receive vacancy payments, the owner must have properly notified the HRA of the vacancy in accordance with the policy in Section 17-VI.F. regarding filling vacancies.

In order for a vacancy payment request to be considered, it must be made within 10 business days of the end of the period for which the owner is requesting the vacancy payment. The request must include the required owner certifications and the HRA may require the owner to provide documentation to support the request. If the owner does not provide the information requested by the HRA within 10 business days of the HRA's request, no vacancy payments will be made.

### **17-IX.C. TENANT RENT TO OWNER [24 CFR 983.353]**

The tenant rent is the portion of the rent to owner paid by the family. The amount of tenant rent is determined by the HRA in accordance with HUD requirements. Any changes in the amount of tenant rent will be effective on the date stated in the HRA notice to the family and owner.

The family is responsible for paying the tenant rent (total tenant payment minus the utility allowance). The amount of the tenant rent determined by the HRA is the maximum amount the owner may charge the family for rental of a contract unit. The tenant rent covers all housing services, maintenance, equipment, and utilities to be provided by the owner. The owner may not demand or accept any rent payment from the tenant in excess of the tenant rent as determined by the HRA. The owner must immediately return any excess payment to the tenant.

#### **Tenant and HRA Responsibilities**

The family is not responsible for the portion of rent to owner that is covered by the housing assistance payment and the owner may not terminate the tenancy of an assisted family for nonpayment by the HRA.

Likewise, the HRA is responsible only for making the housing assistance payment to the owner in accordance with the HAP contract. The HRA is not responsible for paying tenant rent, or any other claim by the owner, including damage to the unit. The HRA may not use housing assistance payments or other program funds (including administrative fee reserves) to pay any part of the tenant rent or other claim by the owner.

#### **Utility Reimbursements**

If the amount of the utility allowance exceeds the total tenant payment, the HRA must pay the amount of such excess to the tenant as a reimbursement for tenant-paid utilities, and the tenant rent to the owner must be zero.

The HRA may pay the utility reimbursement directly to the family or to the utility supplier on behalf of the family. If the HRA chooses to pay the utility supplier directly, the HRA must notify the family of the amount paid to the utility supplier.

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will make utility reimbursements directly to the utility provider.

## **17-IX.D. OTHER FEES AND CHARGES [24 CFR 983.354]**

### **Meals and Supportive Services**

With the exception of PBV assistance in assisted living developments, the owner may not require the tenant to pay charges for meals or supportive services. Non-payment of such charges is not grounds for termination of tenancy.

In assisted living developments receiving PBV assistance, the owner may charge for meals or supportive services. These charges may not be included in the rent to owner, nor may the value of meals and supportive services be included in the calculation of the reasonable rent. However, non-payment of such charges is grounds for termination of the lease by the owner in an assisted living development.

### **Other Charges by Owner**

The owner may not charge extra amounts for items customarily included in rent in the locality or provided at no additional cost to unsubsidized tenants in the premises.



## EXHIBIT 17-1: PBV DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

(Fill out one for each development)

**Date:** June 9, 2021

### DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

**Development Name:** Eastwood Apartments

**Address:** 530 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NE, St. Cloud, MN 56304

**Owner Information:** HRA-owned

**Property Management Company:** none

**HRA-Owned:** Yes

**Mixed Finance Development:** No

### HAP CONTRACT

**Effective Date of Contract:** October 1, 2003

**HOTMA Requirements:** Pre-HOTMA

**Term of HAP Contract:** 10 years + 10 years

**Expiration Date of Contract:** September 30, 2023

### PBV UNITS

	0 BR	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4 BR	5 BR	Total
# of Units		3	1				
Initial Contract Rent	\$	\$450	\$531	\$	\$	\$	

**Accessible Units and Features:** None

**Target Population:** None

**Excepted Units:** None

**Supportive Services:** No

**Elderly Units:** No

**Disabled Units:** No

**Are units excepted because they are located in a low-poverty census tract area?:** No

### **WAITING LIST AND SELECTION**

**Waiting List Type:** Site-based waiting list

**Preferences:** None

**Preference Verification:** None

**For the PBV program, is the income limit the same as the HCV program? (Note: in mixed finance developments, other income limits may also apply.):** Same as HCV; see Chapter 3

### **OCCUPANCY**

**Subsidy Standards:** Same as HCV; see Chapter 5

**Utilities:** Heat, hot water, water/sewage, refuse, lawn care, snow removal

**Vacancy Payments:** None

**EXHIBIT 17-1: PBV DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION**

(Fill out one for each development)

**Date:** June 9, 2021**DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION****Development Name:** Swisshelm Village Apartments I**Address:** 316 Laudenbach Court, St. Cloud, MN 56301**Owner Information:** HRA-owned**Property Management Company:** None**HRA-Owned:** Yes**Mixed Finance Development:** No**HAP CONTRACT****Effective Date of Contract:** June 1, 2003**HOTMA Requirements:** Pre-HOTMA**Term of HAP Contract:** 10 years + 10 years**Expiration Date of Contract:** May 31, 2023**PBV UNITS**

	0 BR	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4 BR	5 BR	Total
# of Units			2-PBV 2-MARIF PBV	2-PBV 2-MARIF PBV			
Initial Contract Rent	\$	\$	\$547	\$689	\$	\$	

**Accessible Units and Features:** #111 (2 bedroom) is handicapped accessible (bathroom, kitchen and entire unit); #102 (3 bedroom) is handicapped accessible (bathroom, kitchen and bedrooms)**Target Population:** 4 PBV Units must meet MARIF eligibility (currently receiving MFIP benefits or received MFIP benefits in the last 24 months)

**Excepted Units:** None

**Supportive Services:** No

**Elderly Units:** No

**Disabled Units (only for HAP contract executed prior to April 18, 2017):** No

**Are units excepted because they are located in a low-poverty census tract area?:** No

### **WAITING LIST AND SELECTION**

**Waiting List Type:** Site-based waiting list

**Preferences:** 2, 3-bedroom and 2, 2-bedroom units are designated MARIF

**Preference Verification:** written verification from the county where MFIP benefits were paid

**For the PBV program, is the income limit the same as the HCV program?** (Note: In mixed finance developments, other income limits may also apply.): Same as HCV; see Chapter 3

### **OCCUPANCY**

**Subsidy Standards:** Same as HCV; see Chapter 5

**Utilities:** Heat, hot water, water/sewage, refuse, lawn care, snow removal

**Vacancy Payments:** None

**EXHIBIT 17-1: PBV DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION**

(Fill out one for each development)

**Date:** June 9, 2021**DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION****Development Name:** Swisshelm Village Apartments II**Address:** 304 Laudenbach Court, St. Cloud, MN 56301**Owner Information:** HRA-owned**Property Management Company:** None**HRA-Owned:** Yes**Mixed Finance Development:** No**HAP CONTRACT****Effective Date of Contract:** February 1, 2004**HOTMA Requirements:** Pre-HOTMA**Term of HAP Contract:** 10 years + 10 years**Expiration Date of Contract:** January 31, 2024**PBV UNITS**

	0 BR	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4 BR	5 BR	Total
# of Units			6	2			
Initial Contract Rent	\$	\$	\$547	\$689	\$	\$	

**Accessible Units and Features:** #111 (2 bedroom) handicapped accessible unit (bathroom, kitchen and entire unit); #102 (3 bedroom) handicapped accessible unit (bathroom, kitchen and entire unit)

**Target Population:** None

**Excepted Units:** None

**Supportive Services:** No

**Elderly Units:** No

**Disabled Units** (only for HAP contracts executed prior to April 18, 2017): No

**Are units excepted because they are located in a low-poverty census tract area?:** No

### **WAITING LIST AND SELECTION**

**Waiting List Type:** Site-based waiting list

**Preferences:** None

**Preference Verification:** None

**For the PBV program, is the income limit the same as the HCV program?** (Note: In mixed finance developments, other income limits may also apply.): Same as HCV; see Chapter 3

### **OCCUPANCY**

**Subsidy Standards:** Same as HCV

**Utilities:** Heat, hot water, water/sewage, refuse, lawn care, snow removal

**Vacancy Payments:** None

**EXHIBIT 17-1: PBV DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION**

(Fill out one for each development)

**Date:** June 9, 2021**DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION****Development Name:** Westwood Village Apartments I**Address:** 770 Savanna Ave., St. Cloud, MN 56303**Owner Information:** HRA-owned**Property Management Company:** None**HRA-Owned:** Yes**Mixed Finance Development:** No**HAP CONTRACT****Effective Date of Contract:** April 1, 2002**HOTMA Requirements:** Pre-HOTMA**Term of HAP Contract:** 10 years + 10 years**Expiration Date of Contract:** March 31, 2022**PBV UNITS**

	0 BR	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4 BR	5 BR	Total
# of Units			4 PBV MARIF				
Initial Contract Rent	\$	\$	\$544	\$	\$	\$	

**Accessible Units and Features:** #111 (2 bedroom) – handicapped accessible unit (bathroom, kitchen and bedrooms); #116 (3 bedroom) – handicapped accessible unit (bathroom, kitchen and bedrooms)

**Target Population:** 4 PBV Units must meet MARIF eligibility (currently receiving MFIP benefits or received MFIP benefits in the last 24 months)

**Excepted Units:** None

**Supportive Services:** No

**Elderly Units:** No

**Disabled Units** (only for HAP contracts executed prior to April 18, 2017): No

**Are units excepted because they are located in a low-poverty census tract area?:** No

### **WAITING LIST AND SELECTION**

**Waiting List Type:** Site-based waiting list

**Preferences:** 4, 2-bedroom units are designated MARIF

**Preference Verification:** written verification from the county where MFIP benefits were paid

**For the PBV program, is the income limit the same as the HCV program?** (Note: In mixed finance developments, other income limits may also apply.): Same as HCV; see Chapter 3

### **OCCUPANCY**

**Subsidy Standards:** Same as HCV; see Chapter 5

**Utilities:** Heat, hot water, water/sewage, refuse, lawn care, snow removal

**Vacancy Payments:** None



**EXHIBIT 17-2: Special Provisions Applying to TPVs Awarded as Part of a Voluntary Conversion of Public Housing Units in Projects that Include RAD PBV Units**

**[24 CFR Part 972.200; Notice PIH 2019-05; Notice PIH 2019-23]**

Under certain circumstances, HUD allows small HRAs to reposition a public housing project (or portion of a project) by voluntarily converting units to tenant-based housing choice voucher assistance. In order to preserve affordable housing for residents of the project, the HRA is given priority to receive replacement tenant protection vouchers (TPVs). As part of the voluntary conversion, the HRA has the option to continue to operate it as rental housing. If so, the HRA or subsequent owner must allow existing families to remain in their units using the TPV in the form of tenant-based assistance. In this situation, however, the HRA may choose to project-base these TPVs in the former public housing project. Families must still be provided with the option to remain in their unit using tenant-based assistance. In order for the HRA to project-base the assistance and include these units on the PBV HAP contract, the family must voluntarily consent in writing to PBV assistance following the requirements in Appendix A of Notice PIH 2019-05. If the family fails to consent to PBV assistance and chooses to remain using tenant-based assistance, the family's unit is excluded from the PBV HAP contract until the family moves out or consents to switching to PBV assistance. In general, all applicable program regulations and guidance for the standard PBV program apply to these units.

The HRA may also convert units in the same former public housing project to the PBV program under the rental assistance demonstration (RAD) program. The RAD statute authorizes HUD to waive certain statutory and regulatory provisions governing the standard PBV program and specify alternative requirements. In order to facilitate the uniform treatment of residents and units at the project, Notice PIH 2019-23 extended some of the alternative requirements to non-RAD PBV units in the converted project (i.e., the TPV units in the project). As such, while PBV TPV units in the converted project generally follow the requirements for the standard PBV program listed in this chapter, where HUD has specified alternative requirements for non-RAD PBV units in the project, PBV TPV units will instead follow the requirements outlined in Chapter 18 of this policy for the RAD PBV program.

**RAD Requirements Applicable to Non-RAD units in the Project**

<b>Alternative Requirement under RAD as Listed in Notice PIH 2019-23</b>	<b>Standard PBV Policy That Does Not Apply</b>	<b>Applicable Policy in Chapter 18</b>
1.6.A.4. Site Selection – Compliance with PBV Goals	17-II.G. SITE SELECTION STANDARDS applies with the exception of deconcentration of poverty and expanding housing and economic opportunity requirements.	18-II.F. SITE SELECTION STANDARDS

1.6.B.5.d. PBV Site-Specific Utility Allowances	Alternative requirement under RAD. No corresponding policy in Chapter 17.	18-VII.C. UTILITY ALLOWANCES
1.6.C.1. No Rescreening of Tenants upon Conversion	Policies contained in Chapter 3 relating to eligibility do not apply to existing tenants who receive TPVs.	18-V.B. PROHIBITED RESCREENING OF EXISTING TENANTS UPON CONVERSION
1.6.C.2. Right to Return	Alternative requirement under RAD. No corresponding policy in Chapter 17.	18-I.D. RELOCATION REQUIREMENTS
1.6.C.3. Phase-in of Tenant Rent Increases	Alternative requirements under RAD. No corresponding policy in Chapter 17.	18-VIII.D. PHASE-IN OF TENANT RENT INCREASES
1.6.C.4. Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) and Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency Service Coordinator (ROSS-SC) Programs	Not covered in administrative plan.	18-VI.C. PUBLIC HOUSING FSS AND ROSS PARTICIPANTS
1.6.C.5. Resident Participation and Funding	Alternative requirement under RAD. No corresponding policy in Chapter 17.	18-VI.D. RESIDENT PARTICIPATION AND FUNDING
1.6.C.6. Resident Procedural Rights	Policies related to hearings in Chapter 16 apply, with added procedural rights and notice requirements as outlined in Chapter 18.	18-VI.H. RESIDENTS' PROCEDURAL RIGHTS
1.6.C.7. Earned Income Disregard (EID)	Alternative requirements under RAD for in-place residents.  New admissions follow policies in Chapter 6.	18-VI.G. EARNED INCOME DISALLOWANCE
1.6.C.8. Jobs Plus	Not covered in administrative plan.	No corresponding policy.
1.6.C.9. When Total Tenant	Alternative requirements	18-VI.B. LEASE, Continuation

Payment Exceeds Gross Rent	under RAD for in-place residents.  New admissions follow policies in 17-VII.B. LEASE, Continuation of Housing Assistance Payments.	of Housing Assistance Payments
1.6.C.10. Under-Occupied Unit	Alternative requirements under RAD for in-place residents.  New admissions follow 17-VII.C. MOVES, Overcrowded, Under-Occupied, and Accessible Units	18-VI.E. MOVES, Overcrowded, Under-Occupied, and Accessible Units
1.6.D.4. Establishment of Waiting List	Alternative requirements under RAD for initial establishment of the waiting list.  Once waiting list is established, follow 17-VI.D. SELECTION FROM THE WAITING LIST	18-V.D. ORGANIZATION OF THE WAITING LIST
1.6.D.10. Initial Certifications and Tenant Rent Calculations	Alternative requirements under RAD for in-place residents. No corresponding policy in Chapter 17.	18-VIII.C. TENANT RENT TO OWNER, Initial Certifications

Note, while Notice PIH 2019-05 states that the HRA must screen families for eligibility for a tenant protection voucher and that families must be below the low-income limit (80 percent of AMI), Notice PIH 2019-23 waives these requirements for residents in projects that include RAD PBV units.



## Chapter 18

### PROJECT BASED VOUCHERS (PBV) UNDER THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE DEMONSTRATION (RAD) PROGRAM

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes HUD regulations and HRA policies related to the Project-Based Voucher (PBV) program under the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program in eight parts:

Part I: General Requirements. This part describes general provisions of the PBV program, including maximum budget authority requirements, relocation requirements, and equal opportunity requirements.

Part II: PBV Project Selection. This part describes the cap on assistance at projects receiving PBV assistance, ownership and control, and site selection standards.

Part III: Dwelling Units. This part describes requirements related to housing quality standards, the type and frequency of inspections, and housing accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Part IV: Housing Assistance Payments Contract. This part discusses HAP contract requirements and policies including the execution and term of the HAP contract.

Part V: Selection of PBV Program Participants. This part describes the requirements and policies governing how the HRA and the owner will select a family to receive PBV assistance.

Part VI: Occupancy. This part discusses occupancy requirements related to the lease and describes under what conditions families are allowed or required to move.

Part VII: Determining Contract Rent. This part describes how the initial rent to owner is determined, and how rent will be redetermined throughout the life of the HAP contract.

Part VIII: Payments to Owner. This part describes the types of payments owners may receive under this program.



## **PART I: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **18-I.A. OVERVIEW AND HISTORY OF THE RAD PROGRAM**

The Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program was authorized in 2012 in order to assess the effectiveness of converting public housing, moderate rehabilitation properties, and units under the rent supplement and rental assistance payments programs to long-term, project-based Section 8 rental assistance. The program's four primary objectives are to:

- Preserve and improve public and other assisted housing.
- Standardize the administration of the plethora of federally subsidized housing programs and rules. The conversions are intended to promote operating efficiency by using a Section 8 project-based assistance model that has proven successful and effective for over 30 years. In other words, RAD aligns eligible properties more closely with other affordable housing programs.
- Attract private market capital for property renovations. Through the use of this model, properties may be able to leverage private debt and equity to make capital repairs.
- Increase tenant mobility opportunities.

Under the first component, a HRA with public housing units may submit an application to HUD to convert some or all of their public housing units to long-term, project-based Section 8 HAP contracts under either:

- Project-based rental assistance (PBRA) under HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing Programs.
- Project-based vouchers (PBVs) under HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH).

This chapter will focus on public housing conversions to the PBV program under RAD. In order to distinguish between requirements for public housing conversion under RAD and PBV units under the standard PBV program, we will refer to the standard PBV program and the RAD PBV program.

## 18-I.B. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

On the whole, the regulations for both the standard and RAD PBV programs generally follow the regulations for the tenant-based HCV program found at 24 CFR Part 982. However, important parts of the tenant-based regulations do not apply to the project-based program. 24 CFR Part 983 outlines the sections of 24 CFR Part 982 that are not applicable to the project-based program.

For the RAD PBV program, Congress authorized HUD to waive certain statutory and regulatory provisions or establish alternative requirements from the standard PBV program. These provisions are identified in Notice PIH 2019-23 (issued September 5, 2019). Any non-RAD PBV units located in the covered project are subject to the same waivers and alternative requirements where noted in Notice PIH 2019-23 and in this policy.

Otherwise, all regulatory and statutory requirements for the standard PBV program in 24 CFR Part 983 and Section 8(o)(13) of the Housing Act of 1937, and all applicable standing and subsequent Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) notices and guidance, including related handbooks, apply to RAD PBV. This includes environmental review, Davis-Bacon, and fair housing requirements.

RAD is authorized by the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-55, approved November 18, 2011), as amended by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-76, approved January 17, 2014), the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015 (Public Law 113-235, approved December 6, 2014), the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016 (Public Law 114-113, approved December 18, 2015), the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, approved May 5, 2017), and section 237 of Title II, Division L, Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public Law 115-141, approved March 23, 2018) collectively, the “RAD Statute.”

Requirements specific to the RAD program may be found in the following:

- Generally, public housing projects converting assistance under RAD are bound by the terms of the notice in effect at the time of closing.
  - Notice PIH 2019-23 was immediately applicable at the time of closing to all projects converting assistance (notwithstanding execution of a commitment for conversion). Notice PIH 2019-23 was published on September 5, 2019.
    - Except with respect to changes in the project eligibility and selection criteria, not included in this policy, which are effective after a 30-day comment period.
  - Notice PIH 2012-32, REV-3 was applicable to projects that were seeking conversion of assistance through RAD, including those where a CHAP had already been issued when it was published January 12, 2017.
    - Except with respect to changes in the project eligibility and selection criteria, not included in this policy, which were effective after a 30-day comment period.



- Notice PIH 2012-32, REV-2 was applicable to projects that were seeking conversion of assistance through RAD, including those where a CHAP had already been issued when it was published June 15, 2015.
  - Except with respect to changes in the project eligibility and selection criteria, not included in this policy, which are effective after a 30-day comment period.
- RAD Quick Reference Guide for Public Housing Converting to PBV Assistance (10/14)
- RAD Welcome Guide for New Awardees: RAD 1st Component (3/15)
- Notice PIH 2016-17, Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Notice Regarding Fair Housing and Civil Rights Requirements and Relocation Requirements Applicable to RAD First Component – Public Housing Conversions.
  - This Notice applies to all projects that have applied for RAD conversion but have not yet converted as of November 10, 2016.
- Notice PIH 2014-17, Relocation Requirements under the RAD Program, Public Housing in the First Component.
  - This notice may apply to projects that have converted to RAD prior to November 10, 2016, AND who have requested and received approval from HUD to be governed by this notice. See PIH Notice 2016-17, Section 1, Paragraph 1.3 for applicability.

**NOTE: The policies in this chapter follow Notice PIH 2016-17. If your project falls under PIH 2014-17, applicable policies may be found in Section 18-I.D.**

- RAD FAQs (<http://www.radresource.net/search.cfm>)

#### HRA Policy

<u>Project</u>	<u>Closing Date</u>	<u>RAD Notice</u>
<u>None</u>		

In other words, the standard PBV program follows many of the same regulations as the tenant-based HCV program, but not all of them, and the RAD PBV program follows many of the same regulations as the standard PBV program, but not all of them.

MTW agencies are able to apply activities impacting the PBV program that are approved in the MTW Plan to properties converting under RAD, provided they do not conflict with RAD requirements.

### **18-I.C. TENANT-BASED VS. PROJECT-BASED VOUCHER ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 983.2]**

Much of the tenant-based voucher program regulations also apply to the PBV program. Consequently, many of the HRA policies related to tenant-based assistance also apply to RAD PBV assistance. The provisions of the tenant-based voucher regulations that do not apply to the PBV program are listed at 24 CFR 983.2.

#### HRA Policy

### **18-I.D. RELOCATION REQUIREMENTS**

For projects that apply for conversion of assistance under the First Component of RAD and will convert November 10, 2016 or later, the following applies [Notice PIH 2016-17]:

- In some developments, in-place residents may need to be relocated as a result of properties undergoing repairs, being demolished and rebuilt, or when assistance is transferred from one site to another. RAD program rules prohibit the permanent, involuntary relocation of residents as a result of conversion. Residents that are temporarily relocated retain the right to return to the project once it has been completed. Any non-RAD PBV units located in the same project are also subject to the right to return.
- Relocation assistance provided to residents will vary depending on the length of time relocation is required. Residents must be properly notified in advance of relocation requirements in accordance with RAD program rules and Uniform Relocation Act (URA) requirements, and other requirements which may be applicable such as Section 104(d) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended. Sample informing notices are provided in Appendices 2–5 of Notice PIH 2014-17. A written relocation plan is required if the RAD conversion involves permanent relocation (including a move in connection with a transfer of assistance) or temporary relocation anticipated to last longer than a year. While the HRA is not required to have a written relocation plan for temporary relocation lasting one year or less, HUD strongly encourages HRAs to prepare one. Appendix II of Notice PIH 2016-17 contains recommended contents for a relocation plan.
- In addition, HRAs must undertake a planning process that complies with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (URA), although not all relocations under RAD will trigger requirements under URA. URA statute and implementing regulations may be found at 49 CFR Part 24. The obligation due to relocating residents under RAD are broader than URA relocation assistance and payments.

- Any residents that may need to be temporarily relocated to facilitate rehabilitation or construction will have a right to return to either: a) a unit at the development once rehabilitation or construction is completed, provided the resident's household is not under-housed; or b) a unit in the development which provides the same major features as the resident's unit in the development prior to the implementation of the RAD conversion.
- Where the transfer of assistance to a new site is warranted and approved, residents of the converting development will have the right to reside in an assisted unit at the new site once rehabilitation or construction is complete.
- If the HRA's proposed plans for conversion would preclude a resident from returning to the development, the resident must be given an opportunity to comment and/or object to such plans. HRAs must alter the project plans to accommodate the resident's right to return to the development if the resident would be precluded from returning to the development.
- Examples of project plans that may preclude a resident from returning to the development include, but are not limited to:
  - Changes in the development's bedroom distribution that decrease the size of the units, resulting in the resident being under-housed;
  - The resident cannot be accommodated in the remaining assisted units due to a reduction in the number of assisted units at the development;
  - Income limit eligibility requirements associated with the LIHTC program or another program; and
  - Failure to provide a reasonable accommodation, in violation of applicable law, where reasonable accommodation may include installation of accessibility features that are needed by the resident.
- Residents of a development undergoing conversion that would be precluded from returning to the development may voluntarily accept a HRA or owner's offer to permanently relocate to alternative housing, and thereby waive their right to return to the development after rehabilitation or construction is completed. In this event, the HRA must secure the resident's written consent to a voluntary permanent relocation in lieu of returning to the development. HRAs are prohibited from employing any tactics to pressure residents into relinquishing their right to return or accepting other housing options. Additionally, a HRA may not terminate a resident's lease if the HRA fails to obtain the resident's consent and the resident seeks to exercise the right to return.

- In the case of multi-HRAse RAD transactions, the resident has a right to return to the development or to other converted HRAse of the development that are available for occupancy at the time the resident is eligible to exercise their right of return. Generally, the resident's right to return must be accommodated within the development associated with the resident's original unit, however, the HRA may treat multiple converted developments on the same site as one for purposes of right to return. Should the HRA seek to have the resident exercise the right to return at a future HRAse, the HRA must secure the resident's consent in writing.
- Alternative housing options may involve a variety of housing options, including but not limited to:
  - Transfers to public housing
  - Admission to other affordable housing properties subject to the applicable program rules
  - Housing choice voucher (HCV) assistance
  - Homeownership programs subject to the applicable program rules
  - Other options identified by the HRA

However, for projects that applied for conversion prior to November 10, 2016, the following applies [Notice PIH 2014-17]:

- In some developments, in-place residents may need to be relocated as a result of properties undergoing repairs, being demolished and rebuilt, or when assistance is transferred from one site to another. RAD program rules prohibit the permanent, involuntary relocation of residents as a result of conversion. Residents that are temporarily relocated retain the right to return to the project once it has been completed.
- Relocation assistance provided to residents will vary depending on the length of time relocation is required. Residents must be properly notified in advance of relocation requirements in accordance with RAD program rules and Uniform Relocation Act (URA) requirements. Sample informing notices are provided in Appendices 2–5 of Notice PIH 2014-17. While the HRA is not required to have a written relocation plan, HUD strongly encourages HRAs to prepare one. Appendix I of Notice PIH 2014-17 contains recommended contents for a relocation plan.
- In addition, HRAs must undertake a planning process that complies with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (URA), although not all relocations under RAD will trigger requirements under URA. URA statute and implementing regulations may be found at 49 CFR Part 24.
- Any residents that may need to be temporarily relocated to facilitate rehabilitation or construction will have a right to return to an assisted unit at the development once rehabilitation or construction is completed. Where the transfer of assistance to a new site is warranted and approved, residents of the converting development will have the right to reside in an assisted unit at the new site once rehabilitation or construction is complete. Residents of a development undergoing conversion of assistance may voluntarily accept a HRA or owner's offer to permanently relocate to another assisted unit, and thereby waive their right to return to the development after rehabilitation or construction is completed.

**18-I.E. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 983.8; 24 CFR 5.105; Notice PIH 2016-17]**

RAD conversions are governed by the same civil rights authorities that govern HUD-assisted activities in general. These authorities prohibit discrimination and impose affirmative obligations on HUD program participants. HRAs must comply with all applicable fair housing and civil rights laws, including but not limited to the Fair Housing Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, when conducting relocation planning and providing relocation assistance. For example, persons with disabilities returning to the RAD project may not be turned away or placed on a waiting list due to a lack of accessible units. Their need for an accessible unit must be accommodated. See the *RAD Fair Housing, Civil Rights, and Relocation Notice* [Notice PIH 2016-17] for more information.



## **PART II: PBV PROJECT SELECTION**

### **18-II.A. OVERVIEW**

Unlike in the standard PBV program where the HRA typically selects the property through an owner proposal selection process, projects selected for assistance under RAD PBV are selected in accordance with the provisions in Notice PIH 2019-23. Therefore, 24 CFR 983.51 does not apply since HUD selects RAD properties through a competitive selection process.

### **18-II.B. OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL [Notice PIH 2019-23]**

For projects governed by Notice PIH 2019-23, the following language applies:

- Under the PBV program, the contract administrator and the owner listed on the contract cannot be the same legal entity (i.e., the HRA cannot execute a contract with itself). To avoid this situation, the HRA may either: 1) Transfer the ownership of the project to a nonprofit affiliate or instrumentality of the HRA (including to a “single-purpose entity” that owns nothing other than the property, which will typically be a requirement of a lender or investor), or 2) The HRA can form a related entity that is responsible for management and leasing and can serve as the owner for purposes of the Section 8 HAP contract; in this scenario, the HAP is then executed between the HRA (as the contract administrator) and the HRA’s related entity (as the owner for HAP contract purposes). Note that in the second scenario, both the HRA and the entity serving as the owner for HAP contract purposes will be required to sign the RAD Use Agreement [RAD Resource Desk FAQ 01/24/19].
- Except where permitted to facilitate the use of low-income housing tax credits, during both the initial term and renewal terms of the HAP contract, ownership must be by a public or nonprofit entity. HUD may also allow ownership of the project to be transferred to a tax credit entity controlled by a for-profit entity to facilitate the use of tax credits for the project, but only if HUD determines that the HRA or a nonprofit entity preserves an interest in the profit. The requirement for a public or nonprofit entity, or preservation of an interest by a HRA or nonprofit in a property owned by a tax credit entity controlled by a for-profit entity, is satisfied if a public or nonprofit entity (or entities), directly or through a wholly owned affiliate (1) holds a fee simple interest in the property; (2) is the lessor under a ground lease with the property owner; (3) has the direct or indirect legal authority to direct the financial and legal interest of the property owner with respect to the RAD units, (4) owns 51 percent or more of the general partner interests in a limited partnership or 51 percent or more of the managing member interests in a limited liability company with all powers of a general partner or managing member, as applicable; (5) owns a lesser percentage of the general partner or managing member interests and holds certain control rights as approved by HUD; (6) owns 51 percent or more of all ownership interests in a limited partnership or limited liability company and holds certain control rights as approved by HUD; or (7) demonstrates other ownership and control arrangements approved by HUD.

- Control may be established through the terms of the project owner's governing documents or through a Control Agreement, provided that in either case amendment of the terms of control requires consent from HUD.

For projects subject to the requirements of Notice PIH 2012-32, REV-3, the following language applies:

- Except where permitted to facilitate the use of low-income housing tax credits, during both the initial term and renewal terms of the HAP contract, ownership must be by a public or nonprofit entity. The requirement for a public or nonprofit entity is satisfied if a public or nonprofit entity (or entities), directly or through a wholly owned affiliate (1) holds a fee simple interest in the property; (2) is the lessor under a ground lease with the property owner; (3) has the direct or indirect legal authority to direct the financial and legal interest of the property owner with respect to the RAD units, (4) owns 51 percent or more of the general partner interests in a limited partnership or 51 percent or more of the managing member interests in a limited liability company with all powers of a general partner or managing member, as applicable; (5) owns a lesser percentage of the general partner or managing member interests and holds certain control rights as approved by HUD; (6) owns 51 percent or more of all ownership interests in a limited partnership or limited liability company and holds certain control rights as approved by HUD; or (7) other ownership and control arrangements approved by HUD.
- If low-income housing tax credits will be used, HUD may allow ownership of the property to be transferred to a tax credit entity controlled by a for-profit entity if HUD determines that the HRA preserves its interest in the property. Preservation of HRA interest in the property includes but is not limited to the following:
  - The HRA, or an affiliate under its sole control, is the general partner or managing member;
  - The HRA retains fee ownership and leases the real estate to the tax credit entity pursuant to a long-term ground lease;
  - The HRA retains control over leasing the property and determining program eligibility;
  - The HRA enters into a control agreement by which the HRA retains consent rights over certain acts of the project owner and retains certain rights over the project;
  - Other means that HUD finds acceptable

For projects that converted assistance prior to the implementation of Notice PIH 2012-32, REV-3, the following language applies:

- During both the initial term and renewal terms of the HAP contract, ownership must be either of the following:
  - A public or nonprofit entity that has legal title to the property. The entity must have the legal authority to direct the financial, legal, beneficial, and other interests of the property; or
  - A private entity, if the property has low-income tax credits. The HRA must maintain control via a ground lease.



### **18-II.C. HRA-OWNED UNITS [24 CFR 983.59, FR Notice 1/18/17, and Notice PIH 2017-21]**

If the project is HRA-owned, rent-setting and inspection functions set out in 24 CFR 983.59 must be conducted by an independent entity approved by HUD.

The definition of *ownership or control* provided under Notice PIH 2019-23 (listed above) is used specifically to determine whether a HRA retains control over a project for purposes of HUD's requirement for ownership or control of the covered project under RAD. For purposes of determining whether an independent entity will perform certain functions for the project, the definition of *HRA-owned* under Notice PIH 2017-21 is used. This is the same definition used for standard PBV units. In some cases, a project may meet the RAD definition of *ownership or control* but may not be considered HRA-owned for purposes of requiring an independent entity.

The independent entity that performs the program services may be the unit of general local government for the HRA jurisdiction (unless the HRA is itself the unit of general local government or an agency of such government), or another HUD-approved public or private independent entity.

The HRA may compensate the independent entity from HRA ongoing administrative fee income (including amounts credited to the administrative fee reserve). The HRA may not use other program receipts to compensate the independent entity for its services. The HRA, and the independent entity, may not charge the family any fee for the services provided by the independent entity.

#### HRA Policy

**18-II.D. SUBSIDY LAYERING REQUIREMENTS [Notice PIH 2019-23; Notice PIH 2012-32, REV-3; Notice PIH 2012-32, REV-2]**

For projects governed by Notice PIH 2019-23, the following language applies:

- In the case of an HRA that will no longer have ACC units as a result of the pending or simultaneous closing, or have less than 50 units remaining and have initiated procedures to dispose of their final ACC units, there is no restriction on the amount of public housing funds that may be contributed to the covered project or projects through the conversion. However, the HRA must estimate and plan for outstanding liabilities and costs and must follow Notice PIH 2016-23 or successor notice regarding the administrative activities required to terminate the ACC if it has no plans to develop additional public housing.
- In the case where the HRA will continue to maintain other units in its inventory under a public housing ACC, a contribution of operating funds to the covered project that exceeds the average amount the project has held in operating reserves over the past three years will trigger a subsidy layering review under 24 CFR 4.13. Similarly, any contribution of capital funds, including Replacement Housing Factor (RHF) or Demolition Disposition Transitional Funding (DDTF), will trigger a subsidy layering review. Notwithstanding the subsidy layering review, HRAs should be mindful of how the capital funds or operating reserves used in the financing of its RAD properties may impact the physical and financial health of properties that will remain in its public housing inventory.
- Following execution of the HAP contract, HRAs are authorized to use operating and capital funds to make HAP payments for the remainder of the first calendar year in which the HAP contract is effective. Otherwise, a HRA may not contribute public housing program funds to the covered project unless those funds have been identified in the RCC and converted at closing for Section 8 RAD purposes.

For projects governed by Notice PIH 2012-32, REV-3, the following language applies:

- In the case of an HRA that is converting all of its ACC units, there is no restriction on the amount of public housing funds that may be contributed to the covered project at closing; the HRA may convey all program funds to the covered projects. In order to cover the cost of administrative activities required to terminate the ACC, once it no longer has units under the ACC and has no plans to develop additional public housing, the HRA may:
  - Designate that a reserve associated with the project be available to fund any public housing closeout costs (such as an operating deficit reserve or a specific HRA closeout reserve). Any funds not needed for public housing closeout costs would remain in such reserve or may be transferred to another reserve associated with the project (such as the replacement reserve). Thereafter, these funds may be used at the project pursuant to the authorized use of the applicable reserve; or
  - Retain funds under the public housing program for this purpose. However, HUD will recapture any public housing funds that a HRA does not expend for closeout costs.

- In the case where the HRA will continue to maintain other units in its inventory under a public housing ACC, a contribution of operating funds to the covered project that exceeds the average amount the project has held in operating reserves over the past three years will trigger a subsidy layering review under 24 CFR 4.13. Similarly, any contribution of capital funds, including Replacement Housing Factor (RHF) or Demolition Disposition Transitional Funding (DDTF), will trigger a subsidy layering review. Notwithstanding the subsidy layering review, HRAs should be mindful of how the capital funds or operating reserves used in the financing of its RAD properties may impact the physical and financial health of properties that will remain in its public housing inventory.
- In addition, following execution of the HAP contract, HRAs are authorized to use operating and capital funds to make HAP payments for the remainder of the first calendar year in which the HAP contract is effective. Otherwise, a HRA may not contribute public housing program funds to the covered project unless such funding has been identified in the approved financing plan and included in the approved “sources and uses” attached to the RCC.

For projects governed by the requirements of Notice PIH 2012-32, REV-2, the following language applies:

- In the case of an HRA that is converting all of its ACC units, there is no restriction on the amount of public housing funds that may be contributed to the covered project at closing; the HRA may convey all program funds to the covered project. HUD will recapture any public housing funds that an HRA has not expended once it no longer has units under ACC. In the case where the HRA will continue to maintain other units in its inventory under a public housing ACC, a contribution of operating funds to the covered project that exceeds the average amount the project has held in operating reserves over the past three years will trigger a subsidy layering review under 24 CFR 4.13. Similarly, any contribution of capital funds, including Replacement Housing Factor (RHF) or Demolition Disposition Transitional Funding (DDTF), will trigger a subsidy layering review. Notwithstanding the subsidy layering review, HRAs should be mindful of how the capital funds or operating reserves used in the financing of its RAD properties may impact the physical and financial health of properties that will remain in its public housing inventory.

## **18-II.E. PBV PERCENTAGE LIMITATION AND UNIT CAP [Notice PIH 2019-23]**

### **PBV Percentage Limitation**

Covered projects do not count against the maximum amount of assistance an HRA may utilize for the PBV program, which under the standard PBV program is set at 20 percent of the authorized units allocated to a HRA under the HCV program. To implement this provision, HUD is waiving section 8(o)(13)(B) of the 1937 Act as well as 24 CFR 983.6.

### **Unit Cap Limitation**

When HUD published REV-3 of Notice PIH 2012-32, the cap on the number of assisted units in each project was eliminated. Under the standard PBV program the cap is set at the greater of 25 units or 25 percent of the units in the project. HUD is waiving this requirement, and projects governed by Notice PIH 2019-23 and Notice PIH 2012-32, REV-3 have no cap on the number of units that may receive PBV assistance in a project.

However, for projects that are governed by REV-2 of Notice PIH 2012-32, the cap on the number of PBV units in the project is increased to 50 percent. In these projects, however, provided units met certain exception criteria, the HRA may have converted a larger number of units to RAD PBV. For projects governed by the requirements of Notice PIH 2012-32, REV-2 **only**, the following language applies:

- In general, the HRA may not provide PBV assistance for units in a project if the total number of dwelling units in the project that will receive PBV assistance during the term of the PBV HAP contract is more than 50 percent of the number of dwelling units (assisted or unassisted) in the project. However, HRAs may exceed the 50 percent limitation when units in the project are occupied by elderly and/or disabled families or families that will receive supportive services. These units are known as “excepted units” and do not count toward the project cap.
- For projects governed by the requirements of Notice PIH 2012-32, REV-2 choosing to include excepted units, additional policy decisions may be required.

#### HRA Policy

#### **18-II.F. SITE SELECTION STANDARDS [Notice PIH 2019-23; Notice PIH 2016-17]**

Site selection requirements set forth in 24 CFR 983.57 apply to RAD PBV, with the exception of 983.57(b)(1) and (c)(2). HUD waives the provisions regarding deconcentration of poverty and expanding housing and economic opportunity for existing housing sites.

To facilitate the uniform treatment of residents and units, any non-RAD PBV units located in the same project are subject to the terms of this provision.

HUD will conduct a front-end civil rights review of the HRA's proposed site in certain circumstances. For RAD PBV conversions that involve new construction located in an area of minority concentration (whether on the existing public housing site or on a new site) HUD will determine whether it meets one of the exceptions that would allow for new construction in an area of minority concentration.

The HRA must ensure that its RAD PBV conversion, including any associated new construction, is consistent with its certification to affirmatively further fair housing and complies with civil rights laws.

#### **18-II.G. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW [Notice PIH 2019-23; *Environmental Review Requirements for RAD Conversions*, March 2019]**

HUD cannot approve an applicant's financing plan submission unless and until the required environmental review has been completed for the applicant's proposed conversion project and found to meet environmental review requirements. Environmental documents must be submitted no later than the applicant's financing plan. HUD will not issue a RAD Conversion Commitment (RCC) if the project plan does not meet the environmental review requirements described in Attachment 1A of Notice PIH 2019-23. Once an awardee has submitted an application for a specific project, they may not make any choice limiting actions before the completion of the environmental review.



## **PART III: DWELLING UNITS**

### **18-III.A. OVERVIEW**

This part identifies the special housing quality standards that apply to the RAD PBV program, housing accessibility for persons with disabilities, and special procedures for conducting housing quality standards inspections.

### **18-III.B. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS [24 CFR 983.101]**

The housing quality standards (HQS) for the tenant-based program generally apply to the PBV program. HQS requirements for shared housing, manufactured home space rental, and the homeownership option do not apply because these housing types are not assisted under the PBV program.

The physical condition standards at 24 CFR 5.703 do not apply to the PBV program.

#### **Lead-based Paint [24 CFR 983.101(c); Notice PIH 2019-23]**

The lead-based paint requirements for the tenant-based voucher program do not apply to the PBV program. Instead, The Lead-based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act (42 U.S.C. 4821-4846), the Residential Lead-based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992 (42 U.S.C. 4851-4856), and implementing regulations at 24 CFR part 35, subparts A, B, H, and R, and 40 CFR 745.227, apply to the PBV program.

### **18-III.C. HOUSING ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES [Notice PIH 2016-17]**

Federal accessibility requirements apply to all conversions, whether they entail new construction, alternations, or existing facilities. The housing must comply with program accessibility requirements of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794) and implementing regulations at 24 CFR part 8. The HRA must ensure that the percentage of accessible dwelling units complies with the requirements of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794), as implemented by HUD's regulations at 24 CFR 8, subpart C.

Housing first occupied after March 13, 1991, must comply with design and construction requirements of the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 and implementing regulations at 24 CFR 100.205, as applicable. (24 CFR 983.102)

### **18-III.D. INSPECTING UNITS**

#### **Initial Inspection [RAD Quick Reference Guide; Notice PIH 2019-23]**

Under standard PBV regulations at 24 CFR 983.103(b), an HRA may not enter into a HAP contract until the HRA has determined all units comply with HQS. It is the responsibility of the contract administrator to perform this initial inspection (unless units are HRA-owned). In order to accommodate projects in which repairs are conducted, however, HUD has waived this requirement when units are undergoing rehabilitation. In this case, units must meet HQS by the date indicated in the RAD Conversion Commitment (RCC).

#### **Turnover Inspections [24 CFR 983.103(c), FR Notice 1/18/17, and Notice PIH 2017-20]**

Before providing assistance to a new family in a contract unit, the HRA must inspect the unit. The HRA may not provide assistance on behalf of the family until the unit fully complies with HQS.

#### **Annual/Biennial Inspections [24 CFR 983.103(d); FR Notice 6/25/14]**

At least once every 24 months during the term of the HAP contract, the HRA must inspect a random sample consisting of at least 20 percent of the contract units in each building, to determine if the contract units and the premises are maintained in accordance with HQS. Turnover inspections are not counted toward meeting this inspection requirement.

##### HRA Policy

If more than 20 percent of the sample of inspected contract units in a building fail the initial inspection, the HRA must reinspect 100 percent of the contract units in the building.

#### **Alternative Inspections [24 CFR 983.103(g); Notice PIH 2016-05]**

In the case of mixed-finance properties that are subject to alternative inspections, the HRA may rely upon an alternative inspection conducted at least triennially to demonstrate compliance with inspection requirements.

##### HRA Policy



**Other Inspections [24 CFR 983.103(e)]**

The HRA must inspect contract units whenever needed to determine that the contract units comply with HQS and that the owner is providing maintenance, utilities, and other services in accordance with the HAP contract. The HRA must take into account complaints and any other information coming to its attention in scheduling inspections.

The HRA must conduct follow-up inspections needed to determine if the owner (or, if applicable, the family) has corrected an HQS violation, and must conduct inspections to determine the basis for exercise of contractual and other remedies for owner or family violation of HQS.

In conducting HRA supervisory quality control HQS inspections, the HRA should include a representative sample of both tenant-based and project-based units.

**Inspecting HRA-Owned Units [24 CFR 983.103(f); Notice PIH 2017-21]**

In the case of HRA-owned units, all required inspections must be performed by an independent entity designated by the HRA and approved by HUD. The independent entity must furnish a copy of each inspection report to the HRA and to the HUD field office where the project is located. The HRA must take all necessary actions in response to inspection reports from the independent agency, including exercise of contractual remedies for violation of the HAP contract by the HRA-owner.



## **PART IV: HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS (HAP) CONTRACT**

### **18-IV.A. OVERVIEW [*PBV Quick Reference Guide 10/14*]**

Public housing projects converting under RAD do not employ the PBV Agreement to Enter into a Housing Assistance Payments (AHAP) contract. Instead, following the execution of all requirements contained in the Commitment to Enter into a HAP (CHAP) contract and the RAD Conversion Commitment (RCC), a project is converted immediately to the RAD PBV HAP contract following the closing of any construction financing. Owners of public housing projects converted to PBV assistance via RAD enter into a HAP contract with the HRA that will administer the PBV assistance. Units assisted under a RAD PBV HAP contract must be subject to long-term, renewable use and affordability restrictions.

### **18-IV.B. HAP CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Contract Information [*PBV Quick Reference Guide 10/14; Notice PIH 2019-23*]**

The RAD PBV program uses the PBV HAP contract for new construction or rehabilitated housing (Form HUD-52530A), as modified by the RAD rider (Form HUD-52621). For closings on or after January 1, 2018, HUD incorporated the RAD rider directly into the standard PBV HAP contract. For closing that occurred prior to January 1, 2018, the RAD rider must be attached to the PBV HAP contract.

The distinction between “existing housing” and “rehabilitated and newly constructed housing” is overridden by RAD requirements. The project must also have an initial RAD use agreement. All public housing RAD conversion properties financed with LIHTC are also required to include an LIHTC rider.

#### **Execution and Effective date of the HAP Contract [*RADBlast! 7/11/16*]**

RAD PBV projects do not employ an Agreement to Enter into a Housing Assistance Payments (AHAP) contract like in the standard PBV program. Rather, when the conditions of the CHAP and the RCC are met and the conversion has closed, the HRA executes the HAP contract. Project owners may select the effective date of the HAP contract as the first day of either of the two months following the completed closing.

#### **Term of HAP Contract [*Notice PIH 2019-23*]**

The initial term of the HAP contract may not be for less than 15 years and may be for a term of up to 20 years upon request of the owner and with approval of the administering voucher agency. Upon expiration of the initial term of the contract, and upon each renewal term of the contract, the owner must accept each offer to renew the contract, for the prescribed number and mix of units, either on the site of the project subject to the expiring contract or, upon request of the project owner and subject to HRA and HUD approval, at another site through a future transfer of assistance. Contracts are subject to the terms and conditions applicable at the time of each offer and further subject to the availability of appropriations for each year of each such renewal. To implement this provision, HUD is waiving section 8(o)(13)(F) of The United States Housing Act of 1937, which permits a minimum term of one year, as well as 24 CFR 983.205(a), which governs the contract term.

### **Agreement to Enter into a HAP (AHAP) Contract [Notice PIH 2019-23]**

For public housing conversions to PBV, there will be no agreement to enter into a Housing Assistance Payments (AHAP) contract. Therefore, all regulatory references to the Agreement (AHAP), including regulations under 24 CFR Part 983 Subpart D, are waived. The definitions for proposal selection date, new construction, rehabilitation, and existing housing are not applicable.

### **Mandatory Contract Renewal [Notice PIH 2019-23]**

By statute, upon contract expiration, the agency administering the vouchers will offer, and the HRA will accept, renewal of the contract for the prescribed number and mix of units, either on the site of the project subject to the expiring contract or, upon request of the project owner and subject to HRA and HUD approval, at another site through a future transfer of assistance. The contract is subject to the terms and conditions applicable at the time of renewal and the availability of appropriations each year for such renewal. Consequently 24 CFR 983.205(b), governing the HRA discretion to renew the contract, will not apply.

In the event that the HAP contract is removed due to breach, non-compliance or insufficiency of appropriations, for all units previously covered under the HAP contract, new tenants must have incomes at or below 80 percent of the area median income at the time of admission and rents may not exceed 30 percent of 80 percent of median income for an appropriate size unit for the remainder of the term of the RAD use agreement.

### **Remedies for HQS Violations [24 CFR 983.208(b)]**

The HRA may not make any HAP payment to the owner for a contract unit during any period in which the unit does not comply with HQS. If the HRA determines that a contract unit does not comply with HQS, the HRA may exercise any of its remedies under the HAP contract, for any or all of the contract units. Available remedies include termination of housing assistance payments, abatement or reduction of housing assistance payments, reduction of contract units, and termination of the HAP contract.

#### HRA Policy

## **18-IV.C. AMENDMENTS TO THE HAP CONTRACT**

### **Floating Units [Notice PIH 2019-23]**

Upon request of the owner to the voucher agency that will administer the project, HUD will permit assistance to float among units within the project that are the same bedroom size. The unit to which assistance is floated must be comparable to the unit being replaced in quality and amenities.

If the HRA chooses to float units, units are not specifically identified on the HAP contract, rather the HAP contract must specify the number and type of units in the property that are RAD PBV units. The property must maintain the same number and type of RAD units from the time of the initial HAP contract execution forward.

#### HRA Policy

### **Reduction in HAP Contract Units [Notice PIH 2019-23]**

Project owners are required to make available for occupancy by eligible tenants the number of assisted units under the terms of the HAP contract.

The HRA may not reduce the number of assisted units without written HUD approval. Any HUD approval of a HRA's request to reduce the number of assisted units under contract is subject to conditions that HUD may impose. MTW agencies may not alter this requirement.

If units are removed from the HAP contract because a new admission's TTP comes to equal or exceed the gross rent for the unit and if the project is fully assisted, the HRA must reinstate the unit after the family has vacated the property. If the project is partially assisted, the HRA may substitute a different unit for the unit on the HAP contract in accordance with 24 CFR 983.207, or where the development has "floating" units.

## **18-IV.D. HAP CONTRACT YEAR AND ANNIVERSARY DATES [24 CFR 983.302(e)]**

The HAP contract year is the period of 12 calendar months preceding each annual anniversary of the HAP contract during the HAP contract term. The initial contract year is calculated from the first day of the first calendar month of the HAP contract term.

The annual anniversary of the HAP contract is the first day of the first calendar month after the end of the preceding contract year. There is a single annual anniversary date for all units under a particular HAP contract.

#### **18-IV.E. OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE HAP CONTRACT [24 CFR 983.210]**

When the owner executes the HAP contract, he or she certifies that at such execution and at all times during the term of the HAP contract:

- All contract units are in good condition and the owner is maintaining the premises and contract units in accordance with HQS;
- The owner is providing all services, maintenance, equipment, and utilities as agreed to under the HAP contract and the leases;
- Each contract unit for which the owner is receiving HAP is leased to an eligible family referred by the HRA, and the lease is in accordance with the HAP contract and HUD requirements;
- To the best of the owner's knowledge, the family resides in the contract unit for which the owner is receiving HAP, and the unit is the family's only residence;
- The owner (including a principal or other interested party) is not the spouse, parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of a family residing in a contract unit;
- The amount of the HAP the owner is receiving is correct under the HAP contract;
- The rent for contract units does not exceed rents charged by the owner for comparable unassisted units;
- Except for HAP and tenant rent, the owner has not received and will not receive any other payment or consideration for rental of the contract unit;
- The family does not own or have any interest in the contract unit (this does not apply to the family's membership in a cooperative); and
- Repair work on the project selected as an existing project that is performed after HAP contract execution within such post-execution period as specified by HUD may constitute development activity, and if determined to be development activity, the repair work undertaken shall be in compliance with Davis-Bacon wage requirements.

#### **18-IV.F. VACANCY PAYMENTS [24 CFR 983.352(b)]**

At the discretion of the HRA, the HAP contract may provide for vacancy payments to the owner for a HRA-determined period of vacancy extending from the beginning of the first calendar month after the move-out month for a period not exceeding two full months following the move-out month. The amount of the vacancy payment will be determined by the HRA and cannot exceed the monthly rent to owner under the assisted lease, minus any portion of the rental payment received by the owner, including amounts available from the tenant's security deposit.

#### HRA Policy

## **PART V: SELECTION OF PBV PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS**

### **18-V.A. OVERVIEW**

Many of the provisions of the tenant-based voucher regulations [24 CFR 982] also apply to the PBV program. This includes requirements related to determining eligibility and selecting applicants from the waiting list. Even with these similarities, there are requirements that are unique to the PBV program. This part describes the requirements and policies related to eligibility and admission to the PBV program.

### **18-V.B. PROHIBITED RESCREENING OF EXISTING TENANTS UPON CONVERSION [Notice PIH 2019-23]**

Current households cannot be excluded from occupancy at the covered project based on any rescreening, income eligibility, or income targeting provisions. Consequently, current households will be grandfathered for application of any eligibility criteria to conditions that occurred prior to conversion but will be subject to any ongoing eligibility requirements for actions that occur after conversion. Post-conversion, the tenure of all residents of the covered project is protected pursuant to PBV requirements regarding continued occupancy unless explicitly modified by Notice PIH 2019-23 (e.g., rent phase-in provisions). For example, a unit with a household that was over-income at time of conversion would continue to be treated as an assisted unit. Thus, 24 CFR 982.201, concerning eligibility and targeting, will not apply for current households. Once that remaining household moves out, the unit must be leased to an eligible family. Existing residents at the time of conversion may not be rescreened for citizenship status or have their social security numbers reverified.

Further, so as to facilitate the right to return to the assisted property, this provision must apply to current public housing residents of the converting project that will reside in non-RAD PBV units placed in a project that contain RAD PBV units. Such families and such contract units will otherwise be subject to all requirements of the applicable program, specifically 24 CFR 983 for non-RAD PBV. Any non-RAD PBV units located in the same project are also subject to the right to return.

For the RAD PBV program, *in-place family* means a family who lived in a pre-conversion property at the time assistance was converted from public housing to PBV under RAD.

### **18-V.C. ELIGIBILITY FOR PBV ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 983.251(a) and (b)]**

Applicants for PBV assistance must meet the same eligibility requirements as applicants for the tenant-based voucher program. Applicants must qualify as a family as defined by HUD and the HRA, have income at or below HUD-specified income limits, and qualify on the basis of citizenship or the eligible immigration status of family members [24 CFR 982.201(a) and 24 CFR 983.2(a)]. In addition, an applicant family must provide social security information for family members [24 CFR 5.216 and 5.218] and consent to the HRA's collection and use of family information regarding income, expenses, and family composition [24 CFR 5.230]. The HRA may also not approve a tenancy if the owner (including a principal or other interested party) of the unit is the parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of the family, unless needed as a reasonable accommodation. An applicant family must also meet HUD requirements related to current or past criminal activity.

#### HRA Policy



**18-V.D. ORGANIZATION OF THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 983.251(c);  
Notice PIH 2019-23]**

The standard PBV regulations at 24 CFR 983.251 set out program requirements related to establishing and maintaining a voucher-wide, PBV program-wide, or site-based waiting list from which residents will be admitted. These provisions will apply unless the project is covered by a remedial order or agreement that specifies the type of waiting list and other waiting list policies. Any non-RAD PBV units located in the same project are also subject to these requirements.

HRA Policy.

### **18-V.E. SELECTION FROM THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 983.251(c)]**

After conversion to RAD PBV, applicants who will occupy units with RAD PBV assistance must be selected from the HRA's waiting list. The HRA may establish selection criteria or preferences for occupancy of particular PBV units.

#### **Income Targeting [24 CFR 983.251(c)(6); Notice PIH 2019-23]**

At least 75 percent of the families admitted to the HRA's tenant-based and project-based voucher programs during the HRA fiscal year from the waiting list must be extremely-low income families. The income targeting requirement applies to the total of admissions to both programs.

Families in place at the time of the conversion are exempt from income targeting requirements. New admissions follow standard PBV requirements. Any non-RAD PBV units located in the same project are also subject to these requirements.

#### **Units with Accessibility Features [24 CFR 983.251(c)(7)]**

When selecting families to occupy PBV units that have special accessibility features for persons with disabilities, the HRA must first refer families who require such features to the owner.

#### **Preferences [24 CFR 983.251(d); FR Notice 11/24/08; Notice PIH 2019-23]**

The HRA may use the same selection preferences that are used for the tenant-based voucher program, establish selection criteria or preferences for the PBV program as a whole, or for occupancy of particular PBV developments or units.

#### HRA Policy

## **18-V.F. OFFER OF PBV ASSISTANCE**

### **Refusal of Offer [24 CFR 983.251(e)(3)]**

The HRA is prohibited from taking any of the following actions against a family who has applied for, received, or refused an offer of PBV assistance:

- Refusing to list the applicant on the waiting list for tenant-based voucher assistance
- Denying any admission preference for which the applicant qualifies
- Changing the applicant's place on the waiting list based on preference, date, and time of application, or other factors affecting selection under the HRA's selection policy
- Removing the applicant from the tenant-based voucher waiting list

### **Disapproval by Landlord [24 CFR 983.251(e)(2)]**

If a PBV owner rejects a family for admission to the owner's units, such rejection may not affect the family's position on the tenant-based voucher waiting list.

### **Acceptance of Offer [24 CFR 983.252]**

#### ***Family Briefing***

When a family accepts an offer for PBV assistance, the HRA must give the family an oral briefing. The briefing must include information on how the program works and the responsibilities of the family and owner. In addition to the oral briefing, the HRA must provide a briefing packet that explains how the HRA determines the total tenant payment for a family, the family obligations under the program, and applicable fair housing information.

#### ***Persons with Disabilities***

If an applicant family's head or spouse is disabled, the HRA must assure effective communication, in accordance with 24 CFR 8.6, in conducting the oral briefing and in providing the written information packet. This may include making alternative formats available (see Chapter 2). In addition, the HRA must have a mechanism for referring a family that includes a member with a mobility impairment to an appropriate accessible PBV unit.

#### ***Persons with Limited English Proficiency***

The HRA should take reasonable steps to assure meaningful access by persons with limited English proficiency in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 13166 (see Chapter 2).

## **18-V.G. OWNER SELECTION OF TENANTS [24 CFR 983.253]**

The owner is responsible for developing written tenant selection procedures that are consistent with the purpose of improving housing opportunities for very low-income families and reasonably related to program eligibility and an applicant's ability to fulfill their obligations under the lease. An owner must promptly notify in writing any rejected applicant of the grounds for any rejection.

### **Leasing [24 CFR 983.253(a)]**

During the term of the HAP contract, the owner must lease contract units to eligible families that are selected and referred by the HRA from the HRA's waiting list. The contract unit leased to the family must be the appropriate size unit for the size of the family, based on the HRA's subsidy standards.

### **Filling Vacancies [24 CFR 983.254(a)]**

The owner must promptly notify the HRA of any vacancy or expected vacancy in a contract unit. After receiving such notice, the HRA must make every reasonable effort to promptly refer a sufficient number of families for the owner to fill such vacancies. The HRA and the owner must make reasonable efforts to minimize the likelihood and length of any vacancy.

#### HRA Policy

## **18-V.H. TENANT SCREENING [24 CFR 983.255]**

### **HRA Responsibility**

The HRA is not responsible or liable to the owner or any other person for the family's behavior or suitability for tenancy. However, the HRA may opt to screen applicants for family behavior or suitability for tenancy and may deny applicants based on such screening.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA must provide the owner with an applicant family's current and prior address (as shown in HRA records) and the name and address (if known by the HRA) of the family's current landlord and any prior landlords.

In addition, the HRA may offer the owner other information the HRA may have about a family, including information about the tenancy history of family members or about drug trafficking and criminal activity by family members. The HRA must provide applicant families a description of the HRA policy on providing information to owners, and the HRA must give the same types of information to all owners.

The HRA may not disclose to the owner any confidential information provided in response to a request for documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, except at the written request or with the written consent of the individual providing the documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(c)].

#### HRA Policy

### **Owner Responsibility**

The owner is responsible for screening and selection of the family to occupy the owner's unit. When screening families the owner may consider a family's background with respect to the following factors:

- Payment of rent and utility bills
- Caring for a unit and premises
- Respecting the rights of other residents to the peaceful enjoyment of their housing
- Drug-related criminal activity or other criminal activity that is a threat to the health, safety, or property of others
- Compliance with other essential conditions of tenancy



## **PART VI: OCCUPANCY**

### **18-VI.A. OVERVIEW**

After an applicant has been selected from the waiting list, determined eligible by the HRA, referred to an owner, and determined suitable by the owner, the family will sign the lease and occupancy of the unit will begin.

### **18-VI.B. LEASE [24 CFR 983.256]**

The tenant must have legal capacity to enter into a lease under state and local law. *Legal capacity* means that the tenant is bound by the terms of the lease and may enforce the terms of the lease against the owner.

The tenant and the owner must enter into a written lease agreement that is signed by both parties. The tenancy addendum must include, word-for-word, all provisions required by HUD.

#### **Lease Requirements [24 CFR 983.256(c); Notice PIH 2019-23]**

The lease for a PBV unit must specify all of the following information:

- The names of the owner and the tenant;
- The unit rented (address, apartment number, if any, and any other information needed to identify the leased contract unit);
- The term of the lease (initial term and any provision for renewal);
- The amount of the tenant rent to owner, which is subject to change during the term of the lease in accordance with HUD requirements;
- A specification of the services, maintenance, equipment, and utilities that will be provided by the owner; and
- The amount of any charges for food, furniture, or supportive services.

The HRA must include resident procedural rights for termination notification and grievance procedures in the owner's lease. These requirements are not part of the regular PBV program but are required under RAD.

#### **Tenancy Addendum [24 CFR 983.256(d)]**

The tenancy addendum in the lease must state:

- The program tenancy requirements
- The composition of the household as approved by the HRA (the names of family members and any HRA-approved live-in aide)

All provisions in the HUD-required tenancy addendum must be included in the lease. The terms of the tenancy addendum prevail over other provisions of the lease.

**Initial Term and Lease Renewal [24 CFR 983.256(f); *PBV Quick Reference Guide 10/14*]**

Leases for residents who will remain in place (i.e., who will not be relocated solely as a result of conversion) must have an effective date that coincides with—and must be signed on or before—the effective date of the RAD PBV HAP contract.

The initial lease term must be for at least one year. The lease must provide for automatic renewal after the initial term of the lease in either successive definitive terms (e.g., month-to-month or year-to-year) or an automatic indefinite extension of the lease term. For automatic indefinite extension of the lease term, the lease terminates if any of the following occur:

- The owner terminates the lease for good cause
- The tenant terminates the lease
- The owner and tenant agree to terminate the lease
- The HRA terminates the HAP contract
- The HRA terminates assistance for the family

**Changes in the Lease [24 CFR 983.256(e)]**

If the tenant and owner agree to any change in the lease, the change must be in writing, and the owner must immediately give the HRA a copy of all changes.

The owner must notify the HRA in advance of any proposed change in the lease regarding the allocation of tenant and owner responsibilities for utilities. Such changes may only be made if approved by the HRA and in accordance with the terms of the lease relating to its amendment. The HRA must redetermine reasonable rent, in accordance with program requirements, based on any change in the allocation of the responsibility for utilities between the owner and the tenant. The redetermined reasonable rent will be used in calculation of the rent to owner from the effective date of the change.



### **Owner Termination of Tenancy [24 CFR 983.257; Notice PIH 2019-23]**

With two exceptions, the owner of a PBV unit may terminate tenancy for the same reasons an owner may in the tenant-based voucher program (see Section 12-III.B. and 24 CFR 982.310). In the PBV program, terminating tenancy for “good cause” does not include doing so for a business or economic reason, or a desire to use the unit for personal or family use or other non-residential purpose.

Projects converting from public housing to PBV under RAD have additional procedural rights that do not apply to the standard PBV program. These procedural rights must be included in the owner’s lease as well as the HRA’s administrative plan. In addition to the regulations at 24 CFR 983.257 related to project owner termination of tenancy and eviction (which MTW agencies may not alter) the termination procedure for RAD conversions to PBV will require that HRAs provide adequate written notice of termination of the lease, which may not be less than:

- A reasonable period of time, but not to exceed 30 days:
  - If the health or safety of other tenants, HRA employees, or persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises is threatened; or
  - In the event of any drug-related or violent criminal activity or any felony conviction
- Not less than 14 days in the case of nonpayment of rent
- Not less than 30 days in any other case, except that if a state or local law provides for a shorter period of time, such shorter period will apply

These provisions apply to non-RAD PBV units located in the project as well.

### ***Tenant Absence from the Unit [24 CFR 983.256(g) and 982.312(a)]***

The lease may specify a maximum period of family absence from the unit that may be shorter than the maximum period permitted by HRA policy. According to program requirements, the family’s assistance must be terminated if they are absent from the unit for more than 180 consecutive days. HRA termination of assistance actions due to family absence from the unit are subject to 24 CFR 982.312, except that the unit is not terminated from the HAP contract if the family is absent for longer than the maximum period permitted.

### **Continuation of Housing Assistance Payments [24 CFR 983.258; Notice PIH 2019-23]**

Current residents living in the property prior to conversion are placed on and remain under the HAP contract when TTP equals or exceeds gross rent. In this case, until such time as the family's TTP falls below the gross rent, the family will pay the owner the lesser of their TTP minus the utility allowance or any applicable maximum rent under the LIHTC program. The family will continue to pay this amount until/if circumstances change and HAP is paid on their behalf. In other words, assistance may subsequently be reinstated if the tenant becomes eligible for assistance. In such cases, the resident is still considered a program participant. All of the family obligations and protections under RAD and standard PBV apply to the resident. Likewise, all requirements with respect to the unit, such as compliance with the HQS requirements, apply as long as the unit is under HAP contract. Any non-RAD PBV units located in the same project are also subject to these requirements.

Unless a waiver is requested and approved, following conversion, 24 CFR 983.53(d) applies, and any new admission referred to the RAD PBV project must be initially eligible for a HAP payment at admission to the program. The HRA may request a waiver from HUD in order to admit otherwise eligible families whose TTP exceeds gross rent and to allow the units those families occupy to remain under the HAP contract even if the HRA has not paid HAP for the family in 180 days.

Further, for any new families admitted after the conversion, assistance will be terminated 180 days after the last housing assistance payment on their behalf. The cessation of housing assistance payments does not affect the family's other rights under its lease, nor does it preclude the resumption of payments as a result of later changes in income, rents, or other relevant circumstances if such changes occur within the 180-day window. If a family's assistance is terminated as a result of their zero HAP status, the HRA must remove the unit from the HAP contract. If the project is fully assisted, the HRA must reinstate the unit after the family has vacated the property. If the project is partially assisted, the HRA may substitute a different unit for the unit on the HAP contract in accordance with 24 CFR 983.207.

#### HRA Policy

## **Security Deposits [24 CFR 983.259; *PBV Quick Reference Guide 10/14*]**

Owners are permitted to recognize security deposit amounts that have been previously provided by tenants who are in-place at the time of the RAD conversion. Otherwise the security deposit requirements for standard PBV apply.

The owner may collect a security deposit from the tenant. The HRA may prohibit security deposits in excess of private market practice, or in excess of amounts charged by the owner to unassisted tenants.

### HRA Policy

When the tenant moves out of a contract unit, the owner, subject to state and local law, may use the security deposit, including any interest on the deposit, in accordance with the lease, as reimbursement for any unpaid tenant rent, damages to the unit, or other amounts owed by the tenant under the lease.

The owner must give the tenant a written list of all items charged against the security deposit and the amount of each item. After deducting the amount used to reimburse the owner, the owner must promptly refund the full amount of the balance to the tenant.

If the security deposit does not cover the amount owed by the tenant under the lease, the owner may seek to collect the balance from the tenant. The HRA has no liability or responsibility for payment of any amount owed by the family to the owner.

## **18-VI.C. PUBLIC HOUSING FSS AND ROSS PARTICIPANTS [Notice PIH 2019-23]**

Current PH FSS participants will continue to participate in the HRA's FSS program, and HRAs will be allowed to use any PH FSS funds granted previously or pursuant to the current fiscal year (FY) PH FSS notice of funding availability (NOFA) to serve those FSS participants who live in units converted to RAD and who will as a result be moving to the HCV FSS program. A HRA must convert the PH FSS program participants at the covered project to their HCV FSS program.

Residents who were converted from the PH FSS program to the HCV FSS program through RAD may not be terminated from the HCV FSS program or have HCV assistance withheld due to the participant's failure to comply with the contract of participation. Consequently, 24 CFR 984.303(b)(5)(iii) does not apply to FSS participants in converted properties.

At the completion of the FSS grant, HRAs should follow the normal closeout procedures outlined in the grant agreement. If the HRA continues to run an FSS program that serves PH and/or HCV participants, the HRA will continue to be eligible (subject to NOFA requirements) to apply for FSS funding.

Current Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency–Service Coordinators (ROSS–SC) program grantees will be able to finish out their current ROSS–SC grants once their housing is converted under RAD. However, once the property is converted, it will no longer be eligible to be counted towards the unit count for future public housing ROSS–SC grants.

At the completion of the ROSS-SC grant, HRAs should follow the normal closeout procedures outlined in the grant agreement. Please note that ROSS-SC grantees may be a nonprofit or local resident association and this consequence of a RAD conversion may impact those entities.

Any non-RAD PBV units located in the same project are also subject to these requirements.

## **18-VI.D. RESIDENT PARTICIPATION AND FUNDING [Notice PIH 2019-23]**

Residents of covered projects converting assistance to PBVs will have the right to establish and operate a resident organization for the purpose of addressing issues related to their living environment and be eligible for resident participation funding.

## **18-VLE. MOVES**

### **Overcrowded, Under-Occupied, and Accessible Units [24 CFR 983.260; Notice PIH 2019-23]**

All in-place tenants at the time of conversion are eligible to remain in the project. Over-housed families should be moved into appropriately sized units if such units are available in the new or rehabbed project. If appropriately sized units are not available, the existing tenants may continue to be over-housed until an appropriately sized unit becomes available or until the tenant leaves the project. Once the unit turns over, it must be leased to an appropriately sized family. Any non-RAD PBV units located in the same project are also subject to these requirements.

Following conversion, the standard PBV regulations apply. If the HRA determines that a family is occupying a wrong-size unit, based on the HRA's subsidy standards, or a unit with accessibility features that the family does not require, and the unit is needed by a family that does require the features, the HRA must promptly notify the family and the owner of this determination, and the HRA must offer the family the opportunity to receive continued housing assistance in another unit.

#### HRA Policy

If the HRA offers the family a tenant-based voucher, the HRA must terminate the housing assistance payments for a wrong-size or accessible unit at the earlier of the expiration of the term of the family's voucher, including any extension granted by the HRA, or the date upon which the family vacates the unit. If the family does not move out of the wrong-size unit or accessible unit by the expiration of the term of the family's voucher, the HRA must remove the unit from the HAP contract.

If the HRA offers the family another form of assistance that is not a tenant-based voucher, and the family does not accept the offer, does not move out of the PBV unit within a reasonable time as determined by the HRA, or both, the HRA must terminate the housing assistance payments for the unit at the expiration of a reasonable period as determined by the HRA and remove the unit from the HAP contract.

#### HRA Policy

#### **Family Right to Move [24 CFR 983.261]**

The family may terminate the lease at any time after the first year of occupancy. The family must give advance written notice to the owner in accordance with the lease and provide a copy of such notice to the HRA.

**Choice Mobility [Notice PIH 2019-23]**

If the family wishes to move with continued tenant-based assistance, the family must contact the HRA to request the rental assistance prior to providing notice to terminate the lease. If the family terminates the lease in accordance with lease requirements, the HRA is required to offer the family the opportunity for continued tenant-based assistance, in the form of a voucher or other comparable tenant-based rental assistance. If a voucher or other comparable tenant-based assistance is not immediately available, the HRA must give the family priority to receive the next available opportunity for continued tenant-based assistance.

If the family terminates the assisted lease before the end of the first year, the family relinquishes the opportunity for continued tenant-based assistance.

HRA Policy:

## **Turnover Cap**

If as a result of RAD, the total number of PBV units (including RAD PBV units) administered by the HRA exceeds 20 percent of the HRA's authorized units under its HCV ACC with HUD, the HRA may establish a turnover cap. The HRA is not required to provide more than three-quarters of its turnover vouchers in any single year to the residents of covered projects. If the HRA chooses to establish a turnover cap and the cap is implemented, the HRA must create and maintain a waiting list in the order requests from eligible households were received.

### HRA Policy



### **Emergency Transfers under VAWA [Notice PIH 2017-08]**

Except where special consideration is needed for the project-based voucher program, the HRA will follow VAWA policies as outlined in Chapter 16 Part IX of this administrative plan, including using the Emergency Transfer Plan as the basis for PBV transfers under VAWA (Exhibit 16-4).

HUD requires that the HRA include policies that address when a victim has been living in a unit for less than a year or when a victim seeks to move sooner than a tenant-based voucher is available.

#### HRA Policy

#### **18-VI.F. REEXAMINATIONS [PBV Quick Reference Guide 10/14]**

A family living in a unit converted from public housing to RAD PBV may retain its certification date. Unless a family's annual reexamination is due at the same time as the effective date of the RAD PBV HAP contract, the HRA does not need to recertify tenants at the point of conversion. For each family residing in a unit undergoing conversion of assistance under RAD, the administering HRA will have to submit a form HUD-50058 reflecting the family's admission to the voucher program. The effective date of the new admission will be the same as the effective date of the RAD PBV HAP contract. The form should include the same information previously found on the public housing form 50058, including the next annual reexamination date.

#### **18-VI.G. EARNED INCOME DISALLOWANCE [Notice PIH 2019-23]**

Tenants who are employed and are currently receiving the EID exclusion at the time of conversion will continue to receive the EID after conversion, in accordance with regulations at 24 CFR 5.617. Upon the expiration of the EID for such families, the rent adjustment will not be subject to rent phase-in; instead, the rent will automatically rise to the appropriate rent level based upon tenant income at that time. Any non-RAD PBV units located in the same project are also subject to these requirements.

Under the HCV program, the EID exclusion is limited to only persons with disabilities [24 CFR 5.617(b)]. In order to allow all tenants (including non-disabled persons) who are employed and currently receiving the EID at the time of conversion to continue to benefit from this exclusion in the PBV project, the provision in section 5.617(b) limiting EID to only persons with disabilities is waived. The waiver and resulting alternative requirement only applies to tenants receiving the EID at the time of conversion. No other tenant, such as tenants who at one time received the EID but are not receiving the EID exclusion at the time of conversion (e.g., due to loss of employment), tenants that move into the property following conversion, etc., is covered by this waiver.

#### **18-VI.H. RESIDENTS' PROCEDURAL RIGHTS [Notice PIH 2019-23]**

HUD is incorporating additional termination notification requirements for public housing projects that convert assistance under RAD to PBV and to non-RAD PBV units located in the same project beyond those for the standard PBV program. In addition to the regulations at 24 CFR 983.257 related to owner termination of tenancy and eviction (which MTW agencies may not alter), the termination procedure for RAD conversions to PBV requires that HRAs provide adequate written notice of termination of the lease, which is:

- A reasonable period of time, but not to exceed 30 days:
  - If the health or safety of other tenants, project owner employees, or persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises is threatened; or
  - In the event of any drug-related or violent criminal activity or any felony conviction.
- Not less than 14 days in the case of nonpayment of rent
- Not less than 30 days in any other case, except that if a state or local law provides for a shorter period of time, such shorter period will apply

## **18-VI.I. INFORMAL REVIEWS AND HEARINGS [Notice PIH 2019-23]**

In addition to reasons for an informal hearing listed at 24 CFR 982.555(a)(1)(i)–(v) (See 16-III.C. Informal Hearings for Participants), an opportunity for an informal hearing must be given to residents for any dispute that a resident may have with respect to an owner action in accordance with the individual’s lease or the contract administrator in accordance with RAD PBV requirements that adversely affect the resident’s rights, obligations, welfare, or status.

- For any hearing required under 24 CFR 982.555(a)(1)(i)–(v), the contract administrator will perform the hearing in accordance with Chapter 16 Part III: Informal Reviews and Hearings, as is the current standard in the program.
- For any additional hearings required under RAD, the HRA (as owner) will perform the hearing.

An informal hearing will not be required for class grievances or for disputes between residents not involving the HRA (as owner) or contract administrator. This hearing requirement does not apply to and is not intended as a forum for initiating or negotiating policy changes between a group or groups of residents and the HRA (as owner) or contract administrator.

The owner must give residents notice of their ability to request an informal hearing as outlined in 24 CFR 982.555(c)(1) for informal hearings that will address circumstances that fall outside of the scope of 24 CFR 982.555(a)(1)(i)–(v). (See Chapter 16)

The owner must provide an opportunity for an informal hearing before an eviction.



## **PART VII: DETERMINING CONTRACT RENT**

### **18-VII.A. INITIAL CONTRACT RENTS [Notice PIH 2019-23]**

RAD conversions are intended to be cost-neutral, and therefore, should not exceed current public housing funding as adjusted for unit size. Since public housing units do not currently have contract rents, HUD provides an estimate of current contract rents for each HRA's public housing units based on current funding as adjusted by bedroom size. Current funding includes operating subsidy, tenant rents, capital funds, replacement housing factor funds (RHF), and demolition disposition transitional funding (DDTF). The funding may limit the amount of initial rent for a property. A detailed explanation of the determination of current funding may be found in Attachment 1C of Notice PIH 2019-23. Once the current funding amount is calculated, the amount is adjusted by bedroom size to determine the current funding rent. HUD uses the same bedroom adjustment factors as in the metropolitan FMR schedules where the project is located.

HRAs may adjust subsidy (and contract rents) across multiple projects as long as the HRA does not exceed the aggregate subsidy for all of the projects the HRA has submitted for conversion under RAD.

Notwithstanding HUD's calculation of the initial contract rent based on the project's subsidy under the public housing program and any modifications made to the initial contract rent, the initial rents are set at the lower of:

- An amount determined by the HRA, not to exceed 110 percent of the fair market rent (FMR) or the HRA's exception payment standard approved by HUD, or the alternate rent cap in a HRA's MTW agreement minus any utility allowance
- The reasonable rent
- The rent requested by the owner

## **18-VII.B. ADJUSTING CONTRACT RENTS [Notice PIH 2019-23; *PBV Quick Reference Guide* 10/14]**

Contract rents will be adjusted annually only by HUD's operating cost adjustment factor (OCAF) at each anniversary of the HAP contract, subject to the availability of appropriations for each year of the contract term. As such, section 8(o)(13)(I) of the 1937 Act, and 24 CFR 983.301 and 983.302, concerning rent determinations, do not apply when adjusting rents. The rent to owner may at no time exceed the reasonable rent charged for comparable unassisted units in the private market, as determined by the contract administrator in accordance with 24 CFR 983.303.

Contract rents may not exceed the reasonable rent, with the exception that the contract rent for each unit may not be reduced below the initial contract rent under the initial HAP contract.

However, the rent to owner may fall below the initial contract rent in the following situations:

- To correct errors in calculations in accordance with HUD requirements
- If additional housing assistance has been combined with PBV assistance after the execution of the initial HAP contract and a rent decrease is required pursuant to 983.55 (prohibition of excess public assistance)
- If a decrease in rent to owner is required based on changes in the allocation of responsibility for utilities between the owner and the tenant

The contract rent adjustment will be the lesser of:

- The current contract rent increased by the operating cost adjustment factor (OCAF), which is published annually in the *Federal Register*; or
- The reasonable rent

The administering HRA (or independent entity, if the project is HRA-owned) is responsible for processing rent adjustments, at each contract anniversary date, in accordance with the prevailing OCAF.

At least 120 days before the contract anniversary date, HUD recommends that the owner submit the OCAF rent adjustment worksheet (Form HUD-9625) to the HRA administering the PBV assistance (or the independent entity). The HRA will validate the data on the form and determine whether the rent exceeds the reasonable rent charged for comparable unassisted units in the private market, in accordance with 24 CFR 983.303. If rents would be unreasonable following application of the requested OCAF, then the rent can only be increased up to the reasonable rent. The approved rent adjustment will go into effect and the new rents to owner will take effect on the date of the contract anniversary.

### **Rent Decrease**

Rents must not be reduced below the initial rent except to correct errors, for additional subsidy to the property, or to realign utility responsibilities.

**18-VII.C. UTILITY ALLOWANCES [Notice PIH 2019-23; *PBV Quick Reference Guide* 10/14]**

When contract rent amounts are set initially, the amount does not include a utility allowance. In general, the utility allowances that are used on the initial HAP contract at closing are the public housing utility allowances that are in effect prior to conversion. The CHAP must be updated prior to conversion to reflect current public housing utility allowances. At its discretion, a HRA may use the FMRs and utility allowances in effect during the 30-day period immediately before the beginning date of the HAP contract.

After conversion, the HRA may maintain a utility allowance schedule for tenant-paid utilities in accordance with standard PBV and HCV utility allowance regulations at 24 CFR 983.301(f)(2)(ii) and 24 CFR 982.517 respectively. The HRA may instead, however, apply site specific utility allowances. HUD waived the requirement for the standard PBV program that the HCV utility allowance be used. If a site-specific utility allowance is used, the utility allowance is applicable to non-RAD PBV units in the project and is calculated consistent with Notice H 2015-04.

HRA Policy

#### **18-VII.D. REASONABLE RENT [24 CFR 983.303]**

At the time the initial rent is established and all times during the term of the HAP contract, the rent to owner for a contract unit may not exceed the reasonable rent for the unit as determined by the HRA, except rents must not be reduced below the initial rent except to correct errors, for additional subsidy to the property, or to realign utility responsibilities.

##### **How to Determine Reasonable Rent**

The reasonable rent of a unit receiving PBV assistance must be determined by comparison to rent for other comparable unassisted units. When making this determination, the HRA must consider factors that affect market rent. Such factors include the location, quality, size, type and age of the unit, as well as the amenities, housing services maintenance, and utilities to be provided by the owner.

##### ***Comparability Analysis***

For each unit, the comparability analysis must use at least three comparable units in the private unassisted market. This may include units in the premises or project that is receiving project-based assistance. The analysis must show how the reasonable rent was determined, including major differences between the contract units and comparable unassisted units, and must be retained by the HRA. The comparability analysis may be performed by HRA staff or by another qualified person or entity. Those who conduct these analyses or are involved in determining the housing assistance payment based on the analyses may not have any direct or indirect interest in the property.

##### **HRA-Owned Units**

For HRA-owned units, the amount of the reasonable rent must be determined by an independent entity approved by HUD in accordance with PBV program requirements. The independent entity must provide a copy of the determination of reasonable rent for HRA-owned units to the HRA and to the HUD field office where the project is located.



## **PART VIII: PAYMENTS TO OWNER**

### **18-VIII.A. HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS**

During the term of the HAP contract, the HRA must make housing assistance payments to the owner in accordance with the terms of the HAP contract. During the term of the HAP contract, payments must be made for each month that a contract unit complies with HQS and is leased to and occupied by an eligible family. The housing assistance payment must be paid to the owner on or about the first day of the month for which payment is due, unless the owner and the HRA agree on a later date.

Except for discretionary vacancy payments, the HRA may not make any housing assistance payment to the owner for any month after the month when the family moves out of the unit (even if household goods or property are left in the unit).

The amount of the housing assistance payment by the HRA is the rent to owner minus the tenant rent (total tenant payment minus the utility allowance).

In order to receive housing assistance payments, the owner must comply with all provisions of the HAP contract. Unless the owner complies with all provisions of the HAP contract, the owner does not have a right to receive housing assistance payments.

### **18-VIII.B. VACANCY PAYMENTS [24 CFR 983.352]**

If an assisted family moves out of the unit, the owner may keep the housing assistance payment for the calendar month when the family moves out. However, the owner may not keep the payment if the HRA determines that the vacancy is the owner's fault.

#### HRA Policy

At the discretion of the HRA, the HAP contract may provide for vacancy payments to the owner. The HRA may only make vacancy payments if:

- The owner gives the HRA prompt, written notice certifying that the family has vacated the unit and identifies the date when the family moved out (to the best of the owner's knowledge);
- The owner certifies that the vacancy is not the fault of the owner and that the unit was vacant during the period for which payment is claimed;
- The owner certifies that it has taken every reasonable action to minimize the likelihood and length of vacancy; and
- The owner provides any additional information required and requested by the HRA to verify that the owner is entitled to the vacancy payment.

The owner must submit a request for vacancy payments in the form and manner required by the HRA and must provide any information or substantiation required by the HRA to determine the amount of any vacancy payment.

#### HRA Policy

### **18-VIII.C. TENANT RENT TO OWNER [24 CFR 983.353; Notice PIH 2019-23]**

The tenant rent is the portion of the rent to owner paid by the family. The amount of tenant rent is determined by the HRA in accordance with HUD requirements. Any changes in the amount of tenant rent will be effective on the date stated in the HRA notice to the family and owner.

The family is responsible for paying the tenant rent (total tenant payment minus the utility allowance). The amount of the tenant rent determined by the HRA is the maximum amount the owner may charge the family for rental of a contract unit. The tenant rent covers all housing services, maintenance, equipment, and utilities to be provided by the owner. The owner may not demand or accept any rent payment from the tenant in excess of the tenant rent as determined by the HRA. The owner must immediately return any excess payment to the tenant.

#### **Initial Certifications [Notice PIH 2019-23]**

For the initial certification, the HRA will use the family's public housing tenant rent (reflected on line 10f of the family's most recent 50058) at the date of conversion to calculate HAP and tenant rent for the PBV program. The HRA will use this amount until the effective date of the earlier of the family's first regular or interim recertification following the conversion. At that point, the HRA will use the family's TTP based on the recertification and the applicable utility allowance (HCV or RAD PBV site-based, as applicable) to determine PBV HAP and tenant rent. Any non-RAD PBV units located in the same project are subject to the same requirements.

#### **Tenant and HRA Responsibilities**

The family is not responsible for the portion of rent to owner that is covered by the housing assistance payment and the owner may not terminate the tenancy of an assisted family for nonpayment by the HRA.

Likewise, the HRA is responsible only for making the housing assistance payment to the owner in accordance with the HAP contract. The HRA is not responsible for paying tenant rent, or any other claim by the owner, including damage to the unit. The HRA may not use housing assistance payments or other program funds (including administrative fee reserves) to pay any part of the tenant rent or other claim by the owner.

#### **Utility Reimbursements**

If the amount of the utility allowance exceeds the total tenant payment, the HRA must pay the amount of such excess to the tenant as a reimbursement for tenant-paid utilities, and the tenant rent to the owner must be zero.

The HRA may pay the utility reimbursement directly to the family or to the utility supplier on behalf of the family. If the HRA chooses to pay the utility supplier directly, the HRA must notify the family of the amount paid to the utility supplier.

#### **HRA Policy**

#### **18-VIII.D. PHASE-IN OF TENANT RENT INCREASES [Notice PIH 2019-23, REV-3]**

For in-place tenants, if the amount the tenant would pay for rent and utilities (TTP) would increase by more than the greater of 10 percent or \$25 purely as a result of conversion, the rent increase will be phased in over three years. To implement this provision, HUD is waiving section 3(a)(1) of the 1937 Act, as well as 24 CFR 983.3 (definition of *total tenant payment (TTP)*) only to the extent necessary to allow for the phase-in of tenant rent increases. For families who were on EID at the time of conversion to RAD PBV, upon the expiration of the EID, the rent adjustment is not subject to rent phase-in.

The HRA must communicate this policy in writing to affected residents.

##### HRA Policy

## **18.VIII.E. OTHER FEES AND CHARGES [24 CFR 983.354]**

### **Meals and Supportive Services**

With the exception of PBV assistance in assisted living developments, the owner may not require the tenant to pay charges for meals or supportive services. Non-payment of such charges is not grounds for termination of tenancy.

In assisted living developments receiving PBV assistance, the owner may charge for meals or supportive services. These charges may not be included in the rent to owner, nor may the value of meals and supportive services be included in the calculation of the reasonable rent. However, non-payment of such charges is grounds for termination of the lease by the owner in an assisted living development.

### **Other Charges by Owner**

The owner may not charge extra amounts for items customarily included in rent in the locality or provided at no additional cost to unsubsidized tenants in the premises.



## EXHIBIT 18-1: PBV DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

(Fill out one for each development)

**Date:** [Enter the date on which this form was completed]

### DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

**Development Name:** [Insert name of PBV development]

**Address:** [Insert full address of PBV development]

**Owner Information:** [Insert PBV development owner name and contact information. If development is HRA-owned, enter "HRA-owned."]

**Property Management Company:** [Insert property management company name and contact information, or enter "None"]

**HRA-Owned:** [Enter "Yes" or "No." If yes, enter name of independent entity.]

**Mixed-Finance Development:** [Enter "Yes" or "No." If yes, list other types of funding and units to which other funding applies.]

### HAP CONTRACT

**Closing Date:** [Enter closing date of RAD conversion]

**List Which RAD Notice Applies to the Project:** [Enter "PIH 2012-32, REV-2," "PIH 2012-32, REV-3," or "PIH 2019-23"]

**Effective Date of Contract:** [Enter start date of HAP contract]

**HOTMA Requirements:** [If HAP contract was signed prior to April 18, 2017, enter "Pre-HOTMA." If HAP contract was signed on or after April 18, 2017, enter "Post-HOTMA."]

**Term of HAP Contract:** [Enter term from HAP contract]

**Expiration Date of Contract:** [Enter expiration date from HAP contract]

### PBV UNITS

	0 BR	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4 BR	5 BR	Total
# of Units							
Initial Contract Rent	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	

**Unit Designation:** [Enter "Fixed" or "Floating"]

**Accessible Units and Features:** [Identify which units are accessible and describe accessibility features or enter "None"]

**Target Population:** [Describe targeted population in accordance with HAP contract or enter “None”]

**Excepted Units (Notice PIH 2012-32, REV-2 Developments Only):** [Identify excepted unit types below or enter “None”]

**Supportive Services:** [Enter “Yes, see Exhibit D of HAP contract” or enter “No”]

**Elderly Units:** [Enter “Yes” or “No.” If yes, identify which units are elderly units.]

**Disabled Units** [Enter “Yes” or “No.” If yes, identify which units are for persons with disabilities.]

### **WAITING LIST AND SELECTION**

**Waiting List Type:** [Enter “Site-based waiting list,” “Combined with HCV,” “Waiting list for entire PBV program,” or “Merged with another assisted housing program”]

**Preferences:** [Enter “Same as HCV; see Chapter 4” or describe preferences offered. If different from HCV, note in Section 18.1.C. of this policy.]

**Preference Verification:** [Enter “Same as HCV; see Chapter 7” or describe for each preference listed above. If different from HCV, note in Section 18.1.C. of this policy.]

**For the PBV program, is the income limit the same as the HCV program?** (Note: In mixed-finance developments, other income limits may also apply.) [Enter “Same as HCV; see Chapter 3” or clearly describe]

### **OCCUPANCY**

**Subsidy Standards:** [Enter “Same as HCV; see Chapter 5” or describe. If different from HCV, note in Section 18.1.C. of this policy.]

**Utilities:** [Enter in accordance with HAP contract Exhibit C]

**Vacancy Payments:** [Enter in accordance with HAP contract Part 1, e, 2 and Section 18-IV.F. within this chapter]



## Chapter 19

### SPECIAL PURPOSE VOUCHERS

#### INTRODUCTION

Special purpose vouchers are specifically funded by Congress in separate appropriations from regular HCV program funding in order to target specific populations. Special purpose vouchers include vouchers for the following programs:

- Family Unification Program (FUP)
- Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) program
- Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH)
- Mainstream
- Non-Elderly Disabled (NED)

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will administer the following types of special purpose vouchers:

Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Vouchers

Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) Program

Mainstream Voucher Program

This chapter describes HUD regulations and HRA policies for administering special purpose vouchers. The policies outlined in this chapter are organized into five sections, as follows:

Part I: Family Unification Program (FUP)

Part II: Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) program

Part III: Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH)

Part IV: Mainstream voucher program

Part V: Non-Elderly Disabled (NED) vouchers

Except as addressed by this chapter and as required under federal statute and HUD requirements, the general requirements of the HCV program apply to special purpose vouchers.



## **PART I: FAMILY UNIFICATION PROGRAM (FUP)**

### **19-I.A. PROGRAM OVERVIEW [Fact Sheet, Housing Choice Voucher Program Family Unification Program (FUP)]**

#### **Overview**

The Family Unification Program (FUP) was authorized by Congress in 1990 to help preserve and reunify families. HRAs that administer the program provide vouchers to two different populations—FUP families and FUP youth.

Families eligible for FUP are families for whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in:

- The imminent placement of the family's child or children in out-of-home care; or
- The delay in the discharge of the child or children to the family from out-of-home care.

There is no time limitation on FUP family vouchers, and the family retains their voucher as long as they are HCV-eligible. There is no requirement for the provision of supportive services for FUP family vouchers.

Youth eligible for FUP are those who:

- Are at least 18 years old and not more than 24 years of age;
- Have left foster care or will leave foster care within 90 days, in accordance with a transition plan described in section 475(5)(H) of the Social Security Act at age 16 and older; and
- Are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

FUP youth vouchers are limited by statute to 36 months of housing assistance. Supportive services must also be provided to FUP-eligible youth by the Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA) or by another agency or organization under contract with the PCWA for at least 18 but up to 36 months.

HRAs that wish to administer FUP vouchers must apply to HUD by submitting an application under an active Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). While the FUP program is administered in accordance with HCV regulations, the FUP NOFAs issued by HUD provide specific program information and requirements.

In order to administer the program, the HRA must also form a partnership with a local PCWA who is responsible for determining the family or youth meets FUP eligibility requirements and referring them to the HRA. Once the referral is received, the HRA is responsible for placing the FUP family or youth on the HRA's waiting list and determining whether they are eligible to receive assistance under the HRA's HCV program.

## **Assigning Vouchers [FUP FAQs]**

The HRA may, but is not required to, assign a specific number or percentage of FUP vouchers for FUP youths and FUP families. Unless the HRA assigns a specific number or percentage of FUP vouchers to a designated FUP population, the HRA must serve any referrals (youths or families) that meet all program eligibility requirements up to the HRA's designated FUP program size.

### HRA Policy

## **19-I.B. PUBLIC CHILD WELFARE AGENCY (PCWA)**

Families and youth do not apply directly to the HRA for FUP vouchers. They are instead referred by a PCWA with whom the HRA has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The partnering PCWA initially determines whether the family or youth meets the FUP program eligibility requirements listed in 19-I.C. and 19-I.D. and then refers those families or youths to the HRA.

HUD strongly encourages HRAs and PCWAs to make decisions collaboratively on the administration of the program and to maintain open and continuous communication. The PCWA must have a system for identifying FUP-eligible youth within the agency's caseload and for reviewing referrals from a Continuum of Care (COC) if applicable.

### HRA Policy

## 19-I.C. FUP FAMILY VOUCHER ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

FUP family assistance is reserved for eligible families that the PCWA has certified are a family for whom a lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in:

- The imminent placement of the family's child or children in out-of-home care, or
- The delay in the discharge of the child or children to the family from out-of-home care.

*Lack of adequate housing* means the family meets any one of the following conditions:

- Living in substandard housing, which refers to a unit that meets any one of the following conditions:
  - Does not have operable indoor plumbing
  - Does not have a usable flush toilet inside the unit for the exclusive use of a family or youth
  - Does not have a usable bathtub or shower inside the unit for the exclusive use of a family or youth
  - Does not have electricity, or has inadequate or unsafe electrical service
  - Does not have a safe or adequate source of heat
  - Should, but does not, have a kitchen
  - Has been declared unfit for habitation by an agency or unit of government, or in its present condition otherwise endangers the health, safety, or well-being of the family or youth
  - Has one or more critical defects, or a combination of intermediate defects in sufficient number or to the extent that it requires considerable repair or rebuilding. The defects may result from original construction, from continued neglect or lack of repair, or from serious damage to the structure
- Being homeless as defined in 24 CFR 578.3
- Living in a unit where the presence of a household member with certain characteristics (i.e., conviction for certain criminal activities) would result in the imminent placement of the family's child or children in out-of-home care, or the delay in the discharge of the child or children to the family from out-of-home care
- Living in housing not accessible to the family's disabled child or children due to the nature of the disability

- Living in an overcrowded unit, which is defined as living in a unit where one of the following conditions has been met:
  - The family is separated from its child or children and the parents are living in an otherwise standard housing unit, but, after the family is reunited, the parents' housing unit would be overcrowded for the entire family and would be considered substandard; or
  - The family is living with its child or children in a unit that is overcrowded for the entire family and this overcrowded condition may result, in addition to other factors, in the imminent placement of its child or children in out-of-home care.
  - For purposes of this definition, the determination as to whether the unit is overcrowded is made in accordance with the HRA subsidy standards in Chapter 5, Part III of this policy.

Since HUD does not define *imminent placement*, the partnering PCWA may use its discretion to determine whether the potential out of home placement of the family's child or children is imminent [FUP FAQs].

## 19-I.D. FUP YOUTH VOUCHER ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

While FUP family vouchers operate as regular HCVs after the family is referred from the PCWA, there are several aspects of the FUP youth vouchers that make them distinct from the FUP family vouchers and from regular HCVs.

### Eligibility Criteria

An FUP-eligible youth is a youth the PCWA has certified:

- Is at least 18 years old and not more than 24 years of age (has not yet reached their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday);
  - The FUP youth must be no more than 24 years old at the time the PCWA certifies them as eligible and at the time of HAP contract execution.
- Has left foster care or will leave foster care within 90 days, in accordance with a transition plan described in section 475(5)(H) of the Social Security Act;
  - Foster care placement can include, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and pre-adoptive homes in accordance with 24 CFR 5.576.
- Is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless at age 16 or older;
  - *At risk of being homeless* is fully defined at 24 CFR 576.2.
    - o This includes a person that is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a healthcare facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution).
    - o Therefore, youth being discharged from an institution may be eligible for a FUP voucher [FUP FAQs].
- Has an annual income at or below 30 percent of area median income; and
- Does not have sufficient resources or support networks (e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks) immediately available to prevent them from moving to a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living arrangements.

### **Maximum Assistance Period**

Although there is no time limit on FUP family vouchers, FUP youth vouchers are limited by statute to 36 months of housing assistance. At the end of the statutory time period, assistance under the FUP youth voucher must be terminated. However, any period of time for which no subsidy (HAP) is being paid on behalf of the youth does not count toward the 36-month limitation.

For HRAs participating in the FUP Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) Demonstration, an exception to the 36-month limitation was granted. Participating HRAs must adopt a policy enabling an FUP youth voucher holder that agreed to sign an FSS Contract of Participation to remain on the program for the life of their contract [Notice PIH 2016-01].

#### HRA Policy



## **Supportive Services**

The PCWA must provide supportive services for at least 18 months to all FUP-eligible youth regardless of their age. The MOU between the HRA and the PCWA should identify the period of time in which supportive services will be provided—from a minimum of 18 months up to the full 36-month program maximum.

### HRA Policy

Supportive services may be provided to FUP-eligible youth by the PCWA or by another agency or organization under agreement or contract with the PCWA, including the HRA. The organization providing the services and resources must be identified in the MOU. The following services must be offered:

- Basic life skills information/counseling on money management, use of credit, housekeeping, proper nutrition/meal preparation; and access to health care (e.g., doctors, medication, and mental and behavioral health services);
- Counseling on compliance with rental lease requirements and with HCV program participant requirements, including assistance or referrals for assistance on security deposits, utility hook-up fees, and utility deposits;
- Providing such assurances to owners of rental property as are reasonable and necessary to assist an FUP-eligible youth to rent a unit with an FUP voucher;
- Job preparation and attainment counseling (where to look/how to apply, dress, grooming, relationships with supervisory personnel, etc.); and
- Educational and career advancement counseling regarding attainment of general equivalency diploma (GED); or attendance or financing of education at a technical school, trade school, or college, including successful work ethic and attitude models.

### HRA Policy

An FUP-eligible youth cannot be required to participate in these services as condition of receipt of the FUP voucher.

## **19-I.E. REFERRALS AND WAITING LIST MANAGEMENT**

### **Referrals**

The PCWA must establish and implement a system to identify FUP-eligible families and youths within the agency's caseload and make referrals to the HRA. The PCWA must certify that the FUP applicants they refer to the HRA meet FUP eligibility requirements. The HRA is not required to maintain full documentation that demonstrates the family's or youth's FUP eligibility as determined by the PCWA but should keep the referral or certification from the PCWA.

#### HRA Policy

An HRA must serve any referrals (youths or families) that meet all program eligibility requirements. If an HRA determines that it has received a sufficient number of referrals from the PCWA so that the HRA will be able to lease all FUP vouchers awarded, the HRA may request that the PCWA suspend transmission of referrals. If the HRA determines that additional referrals will be needed after it has made such a request, the HRA may request that the PCWA resume transmission of referrals [Notice PIH 2011-52].

## **Waiting List Placement**

A family that is already participating in the regular HCV program cannot be transferred to an FUP voucher.

Once a referral is made, the HRA must compare the list of PCWA referrals to its HCV waiting list to determine if any applicants on the PCWA's referral list are already on the HRA's HCV waiting list. Applicants already on the HRA's HCV waiting list retain the order of their position on the list. Applicants not already on the HRA's HCV waiting list must be placed on the HCV waiting list.

If the HRA's HCV waiting list is closed, the HRA must open its HCV waiting list in order to accept new FUP applicants. If necessary, the HRA may open its waiting list solely for FUP applicants, but this information must be included in the HRA's notice of opening its waiting list (see section 4-II.C., Opening and Closing the Waiting List of this administrative plan).

### HRA Policy

## **Waiting List Selection**

The HRA selects FUP-eligible families or youths based on the HRA's regular HCV waiting list selection policies in Chapter 4, including any preferences that may apply.

### **19-I.F. HRA HCV ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION**

Once an FUP-eligible family or youth is selected from the HCV waiting list, the HRA must determine whether the family or youth meets HCV program eligibility requirements. Applicants must be eligible under both FUP family or youth eligibility requirements, as applicable, and HCV eligibility requirements as outlined in Chapter 3 of this policy.

The PCWA may, but is not obligated to, provide information to the HRA on the family's criminal history.

HRA Policy

#### **Additional FUP Eligibility Factors [FUP FAQs]**

For FUP family vouchers, the family must remain FUP-eligible through lease-up.

- If, after a family is referred by the PCWA but prior to issuing a family FUP voucher, the HRA discovers that the lack of adequate housing is no longer a primary factor for the family not reunifying, the FUP voucher may not be issued to the family.
- Similarly, if the FUP voucher has already been issued before the HRA discovers that the reunification will not happen, but the family has not yet leased up under the voucher, the HRA must not execute the HAP contract, as the family is no longer FUP-eligible.

FUP-eligible youth must be no more than 24 years old both at the time of PCWA certification and at the time of the HAP execution. If a FUP youth is 24 at the time of PCWA certification but will turn 25 before the HAP contract is executed, the youth is no longer eligible for a FUP youth voucher.

HRA Policy

### **19.I.G. LEASE UP**

Once the HRA determines that the family or youth meets HCV eligibility requirements, the family or youth will be issued an FUP voucher in accordance with HRA policies.

#### HRA Policy

Once the family or youth locate a unit, the HRA conducts all other processes relating to voucher issuance and administration per HCV program regulations and the HRA's policies (including, but not limited to: HQS inspection, determination of rent reasonableness, etc.).

## **19-I.H. TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE**

### **General Requirements**

With the exception of terminations of assistance for FUP youth after 36 months of housing assistance, terminations of FUP assistance are handled in the same way as the regular HCV program. Termination of an FUP voucher must be consistent with regulations for termination in 24 CFR Part 982, Subpart L and be in compliance with HRA policies (Chapter 12).

If the person who qualifies for the FUP voucher passes away, the family retains the FUP voucher. In the case of an FUP-youth voucher, assistance will terminate after 36 months, even if the FUP-eligible youth is no longer included in the household.

If the person who qualifies for the FUP voucher moves, the remaining family members may keep the FUP voucher based on HRA policy (see administrative plan, Section 3-I.C., Family Breakup and Remaining Member of Tenant Family).

### **FUP Family Vouchers**

If parents lose their parental rights or are separated from their children after voucher lease-up (or their children reach adulthood), the family is still eligible to keep their FUP assistance, as the regulations do not permit HCV termination for a family losing parental rights or the children reaching adulthood. However, the HRA may transfer the assistance of a FUP family voucher holder to regular HCV assistance if there are no longer children in the household.

#### HRA Policy

## **FUP Youth Vouchers**

An HRA cannot terminate a FUP youth's assistance for noncompliance with PCWA case management, nor may the HRA terminate assistance for an FUP youth for not accepting services from the PCWA.

The HRA may not transfer the assistance of an FUP youth voucher holder to regular HCV assistance upon the expiration of the 36-month limit on assistance. However, the HRA may issue a regular HCV to FUP youth if they were selected from the waiting list in accordance with HRA policies and may also adopt a preference for FUP youth voucher holders who are being terminated for this reason.

### HRA Policy

Upon the expiration of the 36-month limit on assistance, an FUP youth voucher holder who has children and who lacks adequate housing may qualify for an FUP family voucher provided they are referred by the PCWA as an eligible family and meet the eligibility requirements for the HRA's HCV program.

### **9-I.I. FUP PORTABILITY**

Portability for a FUP family or youth is handled in the same way as for a regular HCV family. An HRA may not restrict or deny portability for an FUP family or youth for reasons other than those specified in the HCV program regulations, as reflected in Chapter 10 of the administrative plan.

An FUP family or youth does not have to port to a jurisdiction that administers FUP.

If the receiving HRA administers the FUP voucher on behalf of the initial HRA, the voucher is still considered an FUP voucher regardless of whether the receiving HRA has a FUP program.

If the receiving HRA absorbs the voucher, the receiving HRA may absorb the incoming port into its FUP program (if it has one) or into its regular HCV program (if the receiving HRA has vouchers available to do so) and the family or youth become regular HCV participants. In either case, when the receiving HRA absorbs the voucher, an FUP voucher becomes available to the initial HRA.

#### **Considerations for FUP Youth Vouchers**

If the voucher is an FUP youth voucher and remains such upon lease-up in the receiving HRA's jurisdiction, termination of assistance must still take place once the youth has received 36 months of assistance. Any time period during which no subsidy was paid on behalf of the youth does not count under the 36-month limitation. If the receiving HRA is administering the FUP youth voucher on behalf of the initial HRA, the two HRAs must work together to initiate termination upon expiration of the 36-month limit.



#### **19-I.J. PROJECT-BASING FUP VOUCHERS [Notice PIH 2017-21]**

The HRA may project-base FUP vouchers without HUD approval in accordance with Notice PIH 2017-21 and all statutory and regulatory requirements for the PBV program. Project-based FUP vouchers are subject to the PBV program percentage limitation discussed in Section 17-I.A.

The HRA may limit PBVs to one category of FUP-eligible participants (families or youth) or a combination of the two.

##### HRA Policy



## **PART II: FOSTER YOUTH TO INDEPENDENCE INITIATIVE**

### **19-II.A. PROGRAM OVERVIEW [Notice PIH 2020-28]**

The Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) initiative was announced in 2019. The FYI initiative allows HRAs who partner with a Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA) to request targeted HCVs to serve eligible youth with a history of child welfare involvement that are homeless or at risk of being homeless. Rental assistance and supportive services are provided to qualified youth for a period of up to 36 months.

The program was initially only available to HRAs that did not administer FUP vouchers but has since been expanded to all HRAs with an HCV Annual Contributions Contract (ACC). Funding is available either competitively through an FYI NOFA or noncompetitively on a rolling basis in accordance with the application requirements outlined in Notice PIH 2020-28. Under the noncompetitive process, HRAs are limited to 25 vouchers in a fiscal year with the ability to request an additional 25 vouchers for those HRAs with 90 percent or greater utilization of these vouchers. For competitive awards, the number of vouchers is dependent on HRA program size and need.

## **19-II.B. PARTNERING AGENCIES [Notice PIH 2020-28; FYI Updates and Partnering Opportunities Webinar]**

### **Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA)**

The HRA must enter into a partnership agreement with a PCWA in the HRA's jurisdiction in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or letter of intent. The PCWA is responsible for identifying and referring eligible youth to the HRA and providing or securing a commitment for the provision of supportive services once youth are admitted to the program.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will implement a Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) program in partnership with Benton County Human Services, Sherburne County Human Services and Stearns County Human Services.

The PCWA is responsible for:

- Identifying FYI-eligible youth;
- Developing a system of prioritization based on the level of need of the youth and the appropriateness of intervention;
- Providing a written certification to the HRA that the youth is eligible; and
- Providing or securing supportive services for 36 months.

### **Continuum of Care (CoC) and Other Partners**

HUD strongly encourages HRAs to add other partners into the partnership agreement with the PCWA such as state, local, philanthropic, faith-based organizations, and the CoC, or a CoC recipient it designates.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA does not partner with any other agencies besides PCWA.

## **19-II.C. YOUTH ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA [Notice PIH 2020-28; FYI Q&As; FYI FAQs]**

The PCWA is responsible for certifying that the youth has prior qualifying foster care involvement. As determined by the PCWA, eligible youth:

- Are at least 18 years of age and not more than 24 years of age (have not yet reached their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday);
  - Youth must be no more than 24 years of age at the time the PCWA certifies them as eligible and at the time of HAP contract execution.
- Have left foster care or will leave foster care within 90 days, in accordance with a transition plan described in section 475(5)(H) of the Social Security Act;
  - Placements can include, but are not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and pre-adoptive homes in accordance with 24 CFR 5.576;
- Are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless at age 16 and older;
  - *At risk of being homeless* is fully defined at 24 CFR 576.2.
    - o This includes a person that is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a healthcare facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution). Therefore, youth being discharged from an institution may be eligible for an FUP voucher [FUP FAQs].

Eligibility is not limited to single persons. For example, pregnant and/or parenting youth are eligible to receive assistance assuming they otherwise meet eligibility requirements.

## **19-II.D. SUPPORTIVE SERVICES [Notice PIH 2020-28; FYI Updates and Partnering Opportunities Webinar; FYI Q&As]**

Supportive services may be provided by the HRA, PCWA or a third party. The PCWA must provide or secure a commitment to provide supportive services for participating youth for a period of 36 months. At a minimum, the following supportive services must be offered:

- Basic life skills information/counseling on money management, use of credit, housekeeping, proper nutrition/meal preparation, and access to health care (e.g., doctors, medication, and mental and behavioral health services);
- Counseling on compliance with rental lease requirements and with HCV program participant requirements, including assistance/referrals for assistance on security deposits, utility hook-up fees, and utility deposits;
- Providing such assurances to owners of rental property as are reasonable and necessary to assist eligible youth to rent a unit with a voucher;
- Job preparation and attainment counseling (where to look/how to apply, dress, grooming, relationships with supervisory personnel, etc.); and
- Educational and career advancement counseling regarding attainment of general equivalency diploma (GED) or attendance/financing of education at a technical school, trade school, or college, including successful work ethic and attitude models.

### HRA Policy

In accordance with the HRA's MOUs, the following additional supportive services will be provided:

1. Basic life skills counseling on money management, use of credit, housekeeping, proper nutrition/meal preparation and access to health care
2. Counseling on compliance with rental lease requirements and with HCV requirements including assistance/referrals for assistance on security deposits, utility hook-up fees/deposits
3. Provide reasonable assurances to property owners that are necessary to assist an eligible youth to rent a unit with a voucher
4. Job preparation and attainment counseling
5. Education and career advancement counseling

Since participation in supportive services is optional, but strongly encouraged, an FYI participant may decline supportive service.

## **19-II.E. REFERRALS AND WAITING LIST MANAGEMENT [Notice PIH 2020-28; FYI Updates and Partnering Opportunities Webinar FYI FAQs]**

### **Referrals**

The PCWA is responsible for certifying that the youth has prior qualifying foster care involvement. Once the PCWA sends the HRA the referral certifying the youth is program-eligible, the HRA determines HCV eligibility.

The PCWA must have a system for identifying eligible youth within the agency's caseload and reviewing referrals from other partners, as applicable. The PCWA must also have a system for prioritization of referrals to ensure that youth are prioritized for an FYI voucher based upon their level of need and appropriateness of the intervention.

Referrals may come from other organizations in the community who work with the population, but the PCWA must certify that the youth meets eligibility requirements, unless the PCWA has vested another organization with this authority.

The HRA is not required to maintain full documentation that demonstrates the youth's eligibility as determined by the PCWA but should keep the referral or certification from the PCWA. The PCWA is not required to provide the HRA with HCV eligibility documents.

### **HRA Policy**

The HRA and PCWA have identified staff positions to serve as lead FYI liaisons. These positions will be responsible for transmission and acceptance of referrals. The PCWA must commit sufficient staff and resources to ensure eligible youths are identified, prioritized, and determined eligible in a timely manner.

When vouchers are available, the HRA liaison responsible for acceptance of referrals will contact the PCWA liaison via email indicating the number of vouchers available and requesting an appropriate number of referrals. No more than 10 business days from the date the PCWA receives this notification, the PCWA liaison must provide the HRA with a list of eligible referrals, a completed release form, and a written certification for each referral indicating the referral is eligible. The list will include the name, address, and contact phone number for each adult individual who is being referred.

The HRA will maintain a copy of each certification from the PCWA in the participant's file.

## **Waiting List Placement [Notice PIH 2020-28 and FYI FAQs]**

The HRA must use the HCV waiting list for the FYI program. Youth already on the HCV program may not be transferred to an FYI voucher since they are not homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

Once a referral is made, the HRA must compare the list of PCWA referrals to its HCV waiting list to determine if any applicants on the PCWA's referral list are already on the HRA's HCV waiting list. Applicants already on the HRA's HCV waiting list retain the order of their position on the list. Applicants not already on the HRA's HCV waiting list must be placed on the HCV waiting list.

If the HRA's HCV waiting list is closed, the HRA must open its HCV waiting list in order to accept new referrals. If necessary, the HRA may open its waiting list solely for referrals, but this information must be included in the HRA's notice of opening its waiting list (see section 4-II.C., Opening and Closing the Waiting List of this administrative plan).

### HRA Policy

Within 10 business days of receiving the referral from the PCWA, the HRA will review the HCV waiting list and will send the PCWA a list confirming whether or not referrals are on the waiting list.

Referrals who are already on the list will retain their position and the list will be notated to indicate the applicant is FYI-eligible.

For those referrals not already on the waiting list, the HRA will work with the PCWA to ensure they receive and successfully complete a pre-application or application, as applicable. Once the pre-application or application has been completed, the HRA will place the referral on the HCV waiting list with the date and time of the original referral and an indication that the referral is FYI-eligible.

## **Waiting List Selection**

The HRA selects eligible youths based on the HRA's regular HCV waiting list selection policies in Chapter 4, including any preferences that may apply.



## **19-II.F. HRA HCV ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION [FYI FAQs]**

Once an eligible youth is selected from the HCV waiting list, the HRA must determine whether the youth meets HCV program eligibility requirements. Applicants must be eligible under both FYI eligibility requirements and HCV eligibility requirements as outlined in Chapter 3 of this policy.

The PCWA may, but is not obligated to, provide information to the HRA on the youth's criminal history.

### HRA Policy

Subject to privacy laws, the PCWA will provide any available information regarding the applicant's criminal history to the HRA.

The HRA will consider the information in making its eligibility determination in accordance with the HRA's policies in Chapter 3, Part III.

### **Additional Eligibility Factors**

Youth must be no more than 24 years old both at the time of PCWA certification and at the time of the HAP execution. If a youth is 24 at the time of PCWA certification but will turn 25 before the HAP contract is executed, the youth is no longer eligible for a FYI voucher.

### HRA Policy

Any applicant that does not meet the eligibility criteria for the HCV program listed in Chapter 3 or any eligibility criteria listed in this section will be notified by the HRA in writing following policies in Section 3-III.F, including stating the reasons the applicant was found ineligible and providing an opportunity for an informal review.

## **19-II.G. LEASE UP**

Once the HRA determines that the family or youth meets HCV eligibility requirements, the youth will be issued an FYI voucher in accordance with HRA policies.

### **HRA Policy**

Eligible applicants will be notified by the HRA in writing following policies in Section 3-III.F. of this policy. FYI youth will be briefed individually. The HRA will provide all aspects of the written and oral briefing as outlined in Part I of Chapter 5 but will also provide an explanation of the time limit on FYI vouchers as well as discussing supportive services offered by the partnering agency.

Vouchers will be issued in accordance with HRA policies in Chapter 5, Part II, except that the HRA will consider one additional 30-day extension beyond the first automatic extension for any reason, not just those listed in the policy in Section 5-II.E.

Once the youth locates a unit, the HRA conducts all other processes relating to voucher issuance and administration per HCV program regulations and the HRA policy in Chapter 9.

### **Turnover [FYI FAQs]**

For HRAs awarded FYI Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPVs) under Notice PIH 2019-20 where the recipient of the FYI TPV leaves the program, the HRA may request an FYI voucher under the requirements of Notice PIH 2020-28.

For HRAs awarded FYI vouchers under Notice PIH 2020-28 where the recipient of the FYI voucher leaves the program, the HRA must continue to use the FYI voucher for eligible youth upon turnover. Where there are more eligible youth than available FYI turnover vouchers, the HRA may request an FYI voucher under the requirements of Notice PIH 2020-28.

#### **19-II.H. MAXIMUM ASSISTANCE PERIOD [Notice PIH 2020-28 and FYI FAQs]**

Vouchers are limited by statute to a total of 36 months of housing assistance. At the end of the statutory time period, assistance must be terminated. However, any period of time for which no subsidy (HAP) is being paid on behalf of the youth does not count toward the 36-month limitation. It is not permissible to reissue another FYI TPV to the same youth upon expiration of their 36 months of FYI assistance.

Participants do not “age out” of the program. A participant may continue with the program until they have received 36 months of assistance. Age limits are only applied for entry into the program.

#### **19-II.I. TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE [FYI FAQs]**

Termination of a FYI voucher is handled in the same way as with any HCV; therefore, termination of a FYI voucher must be consistent with HCV regulations at 24 CFR Part 982, Subpart L and HRA policies in Chapter 12. Given the statutory time limit that requires FYI vouchers sunset after 36 months, a HRA must terminate the youth’s assistance once the 36-month limit on assistance has expired.

A HRA cannot terminate a FYI youth’s assistance for noncompliance with PCWA case management, nor may the HRA terminate assistance for a FYI youth for not accepting services from the PCWA.

The HRA may not transfer the assistance of FYI voucher holders to regular HCV assistance upon the expiration of the 36-month limit on assistance. However, the HRA may issue a regular HCV to FYI voucher holders if they were selected from the waiting list in accordance with HRA policies. The HRA may also adopt a waiting list preference for FYI voucher holders who are being terminated for this reason.

##### HRA Policy

The HRA will not provide a selection preference on the HRA’s HCV waiting list for FYI voucher holders who are terminated due to the 36-month limit on assistance.

### **19-II.J. PORTABILITY [FYI FAQs]**

Portability for an FYI youth is handled in the same way as for a regular HCV family. A HRA may not restrict or deny portability for an FYI youth for reasons other than those specified in the HCV program regulations, as reflected in Chapter 10 of the administrative plan.

An FYI youth does not have to port to a jurisdiction that administers FYI vouchers.

If the receiving HRA absorbs the voucher, the HRA may absorb the youth into its regular HCV program if it has vouchers available to do so. If the receiving HRA absorbs the youth into its regular HCV program, that youth becomes a regular HCV participant with none of the limitations of an FYI voucher.

The initial and receiving HRA must work together to initiate termination of assistance upon expiration of the 36-month limit.

### **19-II.K. PROJECT-BASING FYI VOUCHERS [FYI FAQs]**

The HRA may project-base certain FYI vouchers without HUD approval in accordance with all applicable PBV regulations and HRA policies in Chapter 17. This includes FYI vouchers awarded under Notice PIH 2020-28. Assistance awarded under Notice PIH 2019-20 is prohibited from being project-based.

## PART III: VETERANS AFFAIRS SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (VASH) PROGRAM

### 19-III.A. OVERVIEW

Since 2008, HCV program funding has provided rental assistance under a supportive housing program for homeless veterans. The Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program combines HCV rental assistance with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) at VA medical centers (VAMCs) and Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). Eligible families are homeless veterans and their families that agree to participate in VA case management and are referred to the VAMC's partner HRA for HCV assistance. The VAMC or CBOC's responsibilities include:

- Screening homeless veterans to determine whether they meet VASH program participation criteria;
- Referring homeless veterans to the HRA;
  - The term *homeless veteran* means a veteran who is homeless (as that term is defined in subsection (a) or (b) of Section 103 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302)). See 38 U.S.C. 2002.
- Providing appropriate treatment and supportive services to potential VASH participants, if needed, prior to HRA issuance of a voucher;
- Providing housing search assistance to VASH participants;
- Identifying the social service and medical needs of VASH participants, and providing or ensuring the provision of regular ongoing case management, outpatient health services, hospitalization, and other supportive services as needed throughout the veterans' participation period; and
- Maintaining records and providing information for evaluation purposes, as required by HUD and the VA.

VASH vouchers are awarded noncompetitively based on geographic need and HRA administrative performance. Eligible HRAs must be located within the jurisdiction of a VAMC and in an area of high need based on data compiled by HUD and the VA. When Congress funds a new allocation of VASH vouchers, HUD invites eligible HRAs to apply for a specified number of vouchers.

Generally, the HUD-VASH program is administered in accordance with regular HCV program requirements. However, HUD is authorized to waive or specify alternative requirements to allow HRAs to effectively deliver and administer VASH assistance. Alternative requirements are established in the HUD-VASH Operating Requirements, which were originally published in the Federal Register on May 6, 2008, and updated March 23, 2012. Unless expressly waived by HUD, all regulatory requirements and HUD directives regarding the HCV program are applicable to VASH vouchers, including the use of all HUD-required contracts and other forms, and all civil rights and fair housing requirements. In addition, the HRA may request additional statutory or regulatory waivers that it determines are necessary for the effective delivery and administration of the program.

The VASH program is administered in accordance with applicable Fair Housing requirements since civil rights requirements cannot be waived under the program. These include applicable authorities under 24 CFR 5.105(a) and 24 CFR 982.53 including, but not limited to, the Fair Housing Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Age Discrimination Act and all HRA policies as outlined in Chapter 2 of this document.

When HUD-VASH recipients include veterans with disabilities or family members with disabilities, reasonable accommodation requirements in Part II of Chapter 2 of this policy apply.

### **19-III.B. REFERRALS [FR Notice 3/23/12 and HUD-VASH Qs and As]**

VAMC case managers will screen all families in accordance with VA screening criteria and refer eligible families to the HRA for determination of program eligibility and voucher issuance. The HRA has no role in determining or verifying the veteran's eligibility under VA screening criteria, including determining the veteran's homelessness status. The HRA must accept referrals from the partnering VAMC and must maintain written documentation of referrals in VASH tenant files. Upon turnover, VASH vouchers must be issued to eligible veteran families as identified by the VAMC.

#### HRA Policy

In order to expedite the screening process, the HRA will provide all forms and a list of documents required for the VASH application to the VAMC. Case managers will work with veterans to fill out the forms and compile all documents prior to meeting with the HRA and submitting an application. When feasible, the VAMC case manager should email or fax copies of all documents to the HRA prior to the meeting in order to allow the HRA time to review them and start a file for the veteran.

After the VAMC has given the HRA a complete referral, the HRA will perform an eligibility screening within five business days of receipt of a VAMC referral.

### **19-III.C. HCV PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY [FR Notice 3/23/12]**

Eligible participants are homeless veterans and their families who agree to participate in case management from the VAMC.

- A *VASH Veteran* or *veteran family* refers to either a single veteran or a veteran with a household composed of two or more related persons. It also includes one or more eligible persons living with the veteran who are determined to be important to the veteran's care or well-being.
- A veteran for the purpose of VASH is a person whose length of service meets statutory requirements, and who served in the active military, naval, or air service, was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable, and is eligible for VA health care.

Under VASH, HRAs do not have authority to determine family eligibility in accordance with HCV program rules and HRA policies. The only reasons for denial of assistance by the HRA are failure to meet the income eligibility requirements and/or that a family member is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program. Under portability, the receiving HRA must also comply with these VASH screening requirements.

#### **Social Security Numbers**

When verifying Social Security numbers (SSNs) for homeless veterans and their family members, an original document issued by a federal or state government agency, which contains the name and SSN of the individual along with other identifying information of the individual, is acceptable in accordance with Section 7-II.B. of this policy.

In the case of the homeless veteran, the HRA must accept the Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD-214) or the VA-verified Application for Health Benefits (10-10EZ) as verification of SSN and cannot require the veteran to provide a Social Security card. A VA-issued identification card may also be used to verify the SSN of a homeless veteran.

#### **Proof of Age**

The DD-214 or 10-10EZ must be accepted as proof of age in lieu of birth certificates or other HRA-required documentation as outlined in Section 7-II.C. of this policy. A VA-issued identification card may also be used to verify the age of a homeless veteran.

#### **Photo Identification**

A VA-issued identification card must be accepted in lieu of another type of government-issued photo identification.

## **Income Eligibility**

The HRA must determine income eligibility for VASH families in accordance with 24 CFR 982.201 and policies in Section 3-II.A. If the family is over-income based on the most recently published income limits for the family size, the family will be ineligible for HCV assistance.

While income-targeting does not apply to VASH vouchers, the HRA may include the admission of extremely low-income VASH families in its income targeting numbers for the fiscal year in which these families are admitted.

### HRA Policy

While income-targeting requirements will not be considered by the HRA when families are referred by the partnering VAMC, the HRA will include any extremely low-income VASH families that are admitted in its income targeting numbers for the fiscal year in which these families are admitted.

## **Screening**

The HRA may not screen any potentially eligible family members or deny assistance for any grounds permitted under 24 CFR 982.552 and 982.553 with one exception: the HRAs is still required to prohibit admission if any member of the household is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program. Accordingly, with the exception of denial for registration as a lifetime sex offender under state law and HRA policies on how sex offender screenings will be conducted, HRA policy in Sections 3-III.B. through 3-III.E. do not apply to VASH. The prohibition against screening families for anything other than lifetime sex offender status applies to all family members, not just the veteran.

## **Denial of Assistance [Notice PIH 2008-37]**

Once a veteran is referred by the VAMC, the HRA must either issue a voucher or deny assistance. If the HRA denies assistance, it must provide the family with prompt notice of the decision and a brief statement of the reason for denial in accordance with Section 3-III.F. Like in the standard HCV program, the family must be provided with the opportunity for an informal review in accordance with policies in Section 3-III.F. In addition, a copy of the denial notice must be sent to the VAMC case manager.



## **19-III.D. CHANGES IN FAMILY COMPOSITION**

### **Adding Family Members [FR Notice 3/23/12]**

When adding a family member after the family has been admitted to the program, HRA policies in Section 3-II.B. apply. Other than the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child, the HRA must approve additional family members and will apply its regular screening criteria in doing so.

### **Remaining Family Members [HUD-VASH Qs and As]**

If the homeless veteran dies while the family is being assisted, the voucher would remain with the remaining members of the tenant family. The HRA may use one of its own regular vouchers, if available, to continue assisting this family and free up a VASH voucher for another VASH-eligible family. If a regular voucher is not available, the family would continue utilizing the VASH voucher. Once the VASH voucher turns over, however, it must go to a homeless veteran family.

### **Family Break Up [HUD-VASH Qs and As]**

In the case of divorce or separation, since the set-aside of VASH vouchers is for veterans, the voucher must remain with the veteran. This overrides the HRA's policies in Section 3-I.C. on how to determine who remains in the program if a family breaks up.

### **19-III.E. LEASING [FR Notice 3/23/12]**

#### **Waiting List**

The HRA does not have the authority to maintain a waiting list or apply local preferences for HUD–VASH vouchers. Policies in Chapter 4 relating to applicant selection from the waiting list, local preferences, special admissions, cross-listing, and opening and closing the waiting list do not apply to VASH vouchers.

#### **Voucher Issuance**

Unlike the standard HCV program which requires an initial voucher term of at least 60 days, VASH vouchers must have an initial search term of at least 120 days. HRA policies on extensions as outlined in Section 5-II.E. will apply.

##### HRA Policy

All VASH vouchers will have an initial term of 120 calendar days.

The family must submit a Request for Tenancy Approval and proposed lease within the 120-day period unless the HRA grants an extension.

The HRA must track issuance of HCVs for families referred by the VAMC or CBOC in PIC as required in Notice PIH 2011-53.

#### **Initial Lease Term**

Unlike in the standard the HCV program, VASH voucher holders may enter into an initial lease that is for less than 12 months. Accordingly, HRA policy in Section 9-I.E., Term of Assisted Tenancy, does not apply.

#### **Ineligible Housing [FR Notice 6/18/14]**

Unlike in the standard HCV program, VASH families are permitted to live on the grounds of a VA facility in units developed to house homeless veterans. Therefore, 24 CFR 982.352(a)(5) and 983.53(a)(2), which prohibit units on the physical grounds of a medical, mental, or similar public or private institution, do not apply to VASH for this purpose only. Accordingly, HRA policy in 9-I.D., Ineligible Units, does not apply for this purpose only.

## **HQS Pre-Inspections**

To expedite the leasing process, HRAs may pre-inspect available units that veterans may be interested in leasing in order to maintain a pool of eligible units. If a VASH family selects a unit that passed an HQS inspection (without intervening occupancy) within 45 days of the date of the Request for Tenancy Approval (Form HUD-52517), the unit may be approved if it meets all other conditions under 24 CFR 982.305. However, the veteran must be free to select his or her unit and cannot be steered to these units.

### HRA Policy

The HRA will not conduct any pre-inspections of available units.

## **19-III.F. PORTABILITY [FR Notice 3/23/12 and Notice PIH 2011-53]**

### **General Requirements**

Portability policies under VASH depend on whether the family wants to move within or outside of the initial VA facility's catchment area (the area in which the VAMC or CBOC operates). In all cases, the initial VA facility must be consulted prior to the move and provide written confirmation that case management will continue to be provided in the family's new location. VASH participant families may only reside in jurisdictions that are accessible to case management services, as determined by case managers at the partnering VAMC or CBOC.

Under VASH, applicant families may move under portability even if the family did not have legal residency in the jurisdiction of the initial HRA when they applied. As a result, HRA policies in Section 10-II.B. about nonresident applicants do not apply.

If the family no longer requires case management, there are no portability restrictions. Normal portability rules apply.

### **Portability within the Initial VAMC's Catchment Area**

A VASH family can move within the VAMC's catchment area as long as case management can still be provided, as determined by the VA. If the initial HRA's partnering VAMC will still provide the case management services, the receiving HRA must process the move in accordance with portability procedures:

- If the receiving HRA has been awarded VASH vouchers, it can choose to either bill the initial HRA or absorb the family if it has a VASH voucher available to do so.
  - If the HRA absorbs the family, the VAMC or CBOC providing the initial case management must agree to the absorption and the transfer of case management.
- If the receiving HRA does not administer a VASH program, it must always bill the initial HRA.

### **Portability Outside of the Initial VAMC's Catchment Area**

If a family wants to move to another jurisdiction where it will not be possible for the initial HRA's partnering VAMC or CBOC to provide case management services, the initial VAMC must first confirm that the new VAMC has an available VASH case management slot and the new VAMC's partner HRA has an available VASH voucher.

After acceptance of the veteran by the new VAMC, the new VAMC will refer the veteran to its partner HRA. In these cases, the family must be absorbed by the receiving HRA either as a new admission or as a portability move-in, as applicable. Upon absorption, the initial HRA's VASH voucher will be available to lease to a new VASH-eligible family, and the absorbed family will count toward the number of VASH slots awarded to the receiving HRA.

### **19-III.G. TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE [FR Notice 3/23/12]**

With the exception of terminations for failure to receive case management, HUD has not established any alternative requirements for termination of assistance for VASH participants. However, prior to terminating VASH participants, HUD strongly encourages HRAs to exercise their discretion under 24 CFR 982.552(c)(2) as outlined in Section 12-II.D. of this policy and consider all relevant circumstances of the specific case. This includes granting reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, as well as considering the role of the case manager and the impact that ongoing case management services can have on mitigating the conditions that led to the potential termination.

VASH participant families may not be terminated after admission for a circumstance or activities that occurred prior to admission and were known to the HRA but could not be considered at the time of admission due to VASH program requirements. The HRA may terminate the family's assistance only for program violations that occur after the family's admission to the program.

#### **Cessation of Case Management**

As a condition of receiving HCV rental assistance, a HUD-VASH-eligible family must receive case management services from the VAMC or CBOC. A VASH participant family's assistance must be terminated for failure to participate, without good cause, in case management as verified by the VAMC or CBOC.

However, a VAMC or CBOC determination that the participant family no longer requires case management is not grounds for termination of assistance and the family is still eligible for assistance under the HCV program. In such a case, at its option, the HRA may offer the family continued HCV assistance through one of its regular vouchers. If the HRA has no voucher to offer, the family will retain its VASH voucher until such time as the HRA has an available voucher for the family.

#### **VAWA [HUD VASH Qs and As and Notice PIH 2017-08]**

When a veteran's family member is receiving protection under VAWA because the veteran is the perpetrator of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the victim must continue to be assisted. Upon termination of the perpetrator's VASH assistance, the victim should be given a regular HCV if one is available, and the perpetrator's VASH voucher should be used to serve another eligible veteran family. If a regular HCV is not available, the victim will continue to use the VASH voucher even after the perpetrator's assistance is terminated.

## **19-III.H. PROJECT-BASING VASH VOUCHERS**

### **General Requirements [Notice PIH 2017-21]**

The HRA may administer project-based VASH vouchers under two circumstances. First, HRAs are authorized to project-base their tenant-based VASH vouchers without additional HUD review or approval in accordance with Notice PIH 2017-21 and all PBV program requirements provided that the VAMC will continue to make supportive services available. Second, since 2010, HUD has awarded VASH vouchers specifically for project-based assistance in the form of PBV HUD-VASH set-aside vouchers. While these vouchers are excluded from the PBV program cap as long as they remain under PBV HAP contract at the designated project, all other VASH vouchers are subject to the PBV program percentage limitation discussed in Section 17-I.A.

If the HRA project-bases VASH vouchers, the HRA must retain documentation of the partnering VAMC's support. Policies for VASH PBV units will generally follow HRA policies for the standard PBV program as listed in Chapter 17, with the exception of the moves policy listed below.

### **Moves [HUD-VASH Qs and As]**

When a VASH PBV family is eligible to move from its PBV unit in accordance with Section 17-VIII.C. of this policy, but there is no other comparable tenant-based rental assistance, the following procedures must be implemented:

- If a VASH tenant-based voucher is not available at the time the family wants (and is eligible) to move, the HRA may require the family to wait for a VASH tenant-based voucher for a period not to exceed 180 days;
- If a VASH tenant-based voucher is still not available after that period, the family must be allowed to move with its VASH voucher, and the HRA is required to replace the assistance in the PBV unit with one of its regular vouchers, unless the HRA and owner agree to remove the unit from the HAP contract; and
- If after 180 days, a VASH tenant-based voucher does not become available and the HRA does not have sufficient available funding in its HCV program to attach assistance to the PBV unit, the family may be required to remain in its PBV unit until such funding becomes available. In determining if funding is insufficient, the HRA must take into consideration its available budget authority, which also includes unspent prior year HAP funds in the HRA's Net Restricted Assets account.

## **PART IV: MAINSTREAM VOUCHER PROGRAM**

### **19-IV.A. PROGRAM OVERVIEW [Notice PIH 2020-01]**

Mainstream vouchers assist non-elderly persons with disabilities and their families in the form of either project-based or tenant-based voucher assistance.

Aside from separate funding appropriations and serving a specific population, Mainstream vouchers follow the same program requirements as standard vouchers. The HRA does not have special authority to treat families that receive a Mainstream voucher differently from other applicants and participants. For example, the HRA cannot apply different payment standards, establish conditions for allowing portability, or apply different screening criteria to Mainstream families.

The Mainstream voucher program, (previously referred to as the Mainstream 5-Year program or the Section 811 voucher program) was originally authorized under the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990. Mainstream vouchers operated separately from the regular HCV program until the passage of the Frank Melville Supportive Housing Investment Act of 2010. Funding for Mainstream voucher renewals and administrative fees was first made available in 2012. In 2017 and 2019, incremental vouchers were made available for the first time since the Melville Act (in addition to renewals and administrative fees), and HRAs were invited to apply for a competitive award of Mainstream vouchers under the FY17 and FY19 NOFAs. In 2020, Notice PIH 2020-22 provided an opportunity for any HRA administering an HCV program to apply for Mainstream vouchers noncompetitively, while Notice PIH 2020-09 authorized an increase in Mainstream voucher units and budget authority for those HRAs already awarded Mainstream vouchers under the FY17 and FY19 NOFAs.

Funds for Mainstream vouchers may be recaptured and reallocated if the HRA does not comply with all program requirements or fails to maintain a utilization rate of 80 percent for the HRA's Mainstream vouchers.

#### **19-IV.B. ELIGIBLE POPULATION [Notice PIH 2020-01 and Notice PIH 2020-22]**

All Mainstream vouchers must be used to serve non-elderly persons with disabilities and their families, defined as any family that includes a person with disabilities who is at least 18 years old and not yet 62 years old as of the effective date of the initial HAP contract. The eligible disabled household member does not need to be the head of household.

The definition of person with disabilities for purposes of Mainstream vouchers is the statutory definition under section 3(b)(3)(E) of the 1937 Act, which is the same as is used for allowances and deductions in the HCV program and is provided in Exhibit 3-1 of this policy.

Existing families receiving Mainstream vouchers, where the eligible family member is now age 62 or older, will not “age out” of the program as long as the family was eligible on the day it was first assisted under a HAP contract.

The HRA may not implement eligibility screening criteria for Mainstream vouchers that is different from that of the regular HCV program.

#### **19-IV.C. PARTNERSHIP AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES [Notice PIH 2020-01]**

HRAs are encouraged but not required to establish formal and informal partnerships with a variety of organizations that assist persons with disabilities to help ensure eligible participants find and maintain stable housing.

##### HRA Policy

The HRA will implement a Mainstream program, in partnership with The Arc Minnesota.



## **19-IV.D. WAITING LIST ADMINISTRATION**

### **General Waiting List Requirements [Notice PIH 2020-01 and Mainstream Voucher Basics Webinar, 10/15/20]**

HRAs must not have a separate waiting list for Mainstream voucher assistance since the HRA is required by the regulations to maintain one waiting list for tenant-based assistance [24 CFR 982.204(f)]. All HRA policies on opening, closing, and updating the waiting list, as well as waiting list preferences in Chapter 4, apply to the Mainstream program.

When the HRA is awarded Mainstream vouchers, these vouchers must be used for new admissions to the HRA's program from the waiting list. The HRA must lease these vouchers by pulling the first Mainstream-eligible family from its tenant-based waiting list. HRAs are not permitted to reassign existing participants to the program in order to make regular tenant-based vouchers available. Further, the HRA may not skip over Mainstream-eligible families on the waiting list because the HRA is serving the required number of Mainstream families.

Upon turnover, vouchers must be provided to Mainstream-eligible families. If a Mainstream turnover voucher becomes available, the HRA must determine if the families at the top of the waiting list qualify under program requirements.

### **Admission Preferences [Notice PIH 2020-01; FY17 Mainstream NOFA; FY19 Mainstream NOFA]**

If the HRA claimed points for a preference in a NOFA application for Mainstream vouchers, the HRA must adopt a preference for at least one of the targeted groups identified in the NOFA.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA claimed a preference for a targeted group as part of an application for Mainstream vouchers under a NOFA. The HRA will offer the following preference:

1. Transitioning out of institutional/segregated settings
2. At serious risk of institutionalization
3. Currently experiencing homelessness
4. Previously experienced homelessness and currently a client in a permanent supportive housing (PSH) or rapid rehousing (RRH) project
5. At risk of experiencing homelessness

Preferences are limited to the first 30 households that qualify for the preference.

(NOTE: This preference was fulfilled in March 2020.)

#### **19-IV.E. PORTABILITY [Notice PIH 2020-01 and Mainstream Voucher Basics Webinar, 10/15/20]**

Mainstream voucher participants are eligible for portability under standard portability rules and all HRA policies regarding portability in Chapter 10, Part II apply to Mainstream families.

The following special considerations for Mainstream vouchers apply under portability:

- If the receiving HRA has a Mainstream voucher available, the participant may remain a Mainstream participant.
  - If the receiving HRA chooses to bill the initial HRA, then the voucher will remain a Mainstream voucher.
  - If the receiving HRA chooses to absorb the voucher, the voucher will be considered a regular voucher, or a Mainstream voucher if the receiving HRA has a Mainstream voucher available, and the Mainstream voucher at the initial HRA will be freed up to lease to another Mainstream-eligible family.
- If the receiving HRA does not have a Mainstream voucher available, the participant may receive a regular voucher.

#### **19-IV.F. PROJECT-BASING MAINSTREAM VOUCHERS [FY19 Mainstream Voucher NOFA Q&A]**

The HRA may project-base Mainstream vouchers in accordance with all applicable PBV regulations and HRA policies in Chapter 17. HRAs are responsible for ensuring that, in addition to complying with project-based voucher program requirements, the project complies with all applicable federal nondiscrimination and civil rights statutes and requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504), Titles II or III of the Americans with Disabilities (ADA), and the Fair Housing Act and their implementing regulations at 24 CFR Part 8; 28 CFR Parts 35 and 36; and 24 CFR Part 100. Mainstream vouchers are subject to the PBV program percentage limitation discussed in Section 17-I.A.

## PART V: NON-ELDERLY DISABLED (NED) VOUCHERS

### 19-V.A. PROGRAM OVERVIEW [Notice PIH 2013-19]

NED vouchers help non-elderly disabled families lease suitable, accessible, and affordable housing in the private market. Aside from separate funding appropriations and serving a specific population, NED vouchers follow the same program requirements as standard vouchers. The HRA does not have special authority to treat families that receive a NED voucher differently from other applicants and participants.

Some NED vouchers are awarded to HRAs through competitive NOFAs. The NOFA for FY2009 Rental Assistance for NED made incremental funding available for two categories of NED families:

- **Category 1** vouchers enable non-elderly persons or families with disabilities to access affordable housing on the private market.
- **Category 2** vouchers enable non-elderly persons with disabilities currently residing in nursing homes or other healthcare institutions to transition into the community. HRAs with NED Category 2 vouchers were required to partner with a state Medicaid or health agency or the state Money Follows the Person (MFP) Demonstration agency.

Since 1997, HCVs for NED families have been also awarded under various special purpose HCV programs: Rental Assistance for Non-Elderly Persons with Disabilities in Support of Designated Housing Plans (Designated Housing), Rental Assistance for Non-Elderly Persons with Disabilities Related to Certain Types of Section 8 Project-Based Developments (Certain Developments), One-Year Mainstream Housing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, and the Project Access Pilot Program (formerly Access Housing 2000).

- **Designated Housing** vouchers enable non-elderly disabled families, who would have been eligible for a public housing unit if occupancy of the unit or entire project had not been restricted to elderly families only through an approved Designated Housing Plan, to receive rental assistance. These vouchers may also assist non-elderly disabled families living in a designated unit/project/building to move from that project if they so choose. The family does not have to be listed on the HRA's voucher waiting list. Instead, they may be admitted to the program as a special admission. Once the impacted families have been served, the HRA may begin issuing these vouchers to non-elderly disabled families from their HCV waiting list. Upon turnover, these vouchers must be issued to non-elderly disabled families from the HRA's HCV waiting list.

- **Certain Developments** vouchers enable non-elderly families having a person with disabilities, who do not currently receive housing assistance in certain developments where owners establish preferences for, or restrict occupancy to, elderly families, to obtain affordable housing. These non-elderly families with a disabled person do not need to be listed on the HRA's HCV waiting list in order to be offered and receive housing choice voucher rental assistance. It is sufficient that these families' names are on the waiting list for a covered development at the time their names are provided to the HRA by the owner. Once the impacted families have been served, the HRA may begin issuing these vouchers to non-elderly disabled families from their HCV waiting list. Upon turnover, these vouchers must be issued to non-elderly disabled families from the HRA's HCV waiting list.
- **One-Year Mainstream Housing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (One-Year Mainstream)** vouchers enable non-elderly disabled families on the HRA's waiting list to receive a voucher. After initial leasing, turnover vouchers must be issued to non-elderly disabled families from the HRA's voucher waiting list.

## 19-V.B. ELIGIBLE POPULATION

### General Requirements [Notice PIH 2013-19]

Only eligible families whose head of household, spouse, or cohead is non-elderly (under age 62) and disabled may receive a NED voucher. Families with only a minor child with a disability are not eligible.

In cases where the qualifying household member now qualifies as elderly due to the passage of time since the family received the NED voucher, existing NED participant families do not "age out," as the family was eligible on the day it was first assisted under a housing assistance payments (HAP) contract.

The definition of person with disabilities for purposes of NED vouchers is the statutory definition under Section 3(b)(3)(E) of the 1937 Act, which is the same as is used for allowances and deductions in the HCV program and is provided in Exhibit 3-1 of this policy.

The HRA may not implement eligibility screening criteria for NED vouchers that is different from that of the regular HCV program.

### NED Category 2 [Notice PIH 2013-19 and NED Category 2 FAQs]

In addition to being eligible for the HRA's regular HCV program and a non-elderly person with a disability, in order to receive a Category 2 voucher, the family's head, spouse, cohead, or sole member must be transitioning from a nursing home or other healthcare institution and provided services needed to live independently in the community.

Nursing homes or other healthcare institutions may include intermediate care facilities and specialized institutions that care for those with intellectual disabilities, developmentally disabled, or mentally ill, but do not include board and care facilities (e.g., adult homes, adult day care, adult congregate living).

The HRA cannot limit who can apply to just those persons referred or approved by a Money Follows the Person (MFP) Demonstration agency or state health agency. Other individuals could be placed on the waiting list if they can show, with confirmation by an independent agency or organization that routinely provides such services (this can be the MFP or partnering agency, but need not be), that the transitioning individual will be provided with all necessary services, including care or case management.

For each Category 2 family, there must be documentation (e.g., a copy of a referral letter from the partnering or referring agency) in the tenant file identifying the institution where the family lived at the time of voucher issuance.

## **19-V.C. WAITING LIST**

### **General Requirements [Notice PIH 2013-19]**

Families must be selected for NED vouchers from the HRA's waiting list in accordance with all applicable regulations and HRA policies in Chapter 4.

Regardless of the number of NED families the HRA is required to serve, the next family on the waiting list must be served. Further, the HRA may not skip over NED-eligible families on the waiting list because the HRA is serving the required number of NED families.

### **NED Category 2 Referrals [NED Category 2 FAQs]**

For NED Category 2 families, the partnering agency may make referrals of eligible families to the HRA for placement on the waiting list. The HRA will then select these families from the waiting list for voucher issuance. Because language in the NOFA established that vouchers awarded under the NOFA must only serve non-elderly disabled families transitioning from institutions, the HRA does not need to establish a preference in order to serve these families ahead of other families on the HRA's waiting list.

HRAs must accept applications from people living outside their jurisdictions or from people being referred from other Medicaid or MFP service agencies in their state.

If the HRA's waiting list is closed, the HRA must reopen its waiting list to accept referrals from its partnering agency. When opening the waiting list, HRAs must advertise in accordance with 24 CFR 982.206 and HRA policies in Section 4-II.C. In addition, the HRA must ensure that individuals living in eligible institutions are aware when the HRA opens its waiting list by reaching out to social service agencies, nursing homes, intermediate care facilities and specialized institutions in the local service area.

### **Reissuance of Turnover Vouchers [Notice PIH 2013-19]**

All NED turnover vouchers must be reissued to the next NED family on the HRA's waiting list with the following exception: A Category 2 voucher must be issued to another Category 2 family upon turnover if a Category 2 family is on the HRA's waiting list. If there are no Category 2 families on the HRA's waiting list, the HRA must contact its partnering agency as well as conduct outreach through appropriate social service agencies and qualifying institutions to identify potentially eligible individuals. Only after all means of outreach have been taken to reach Category 2 families can the HRA reissue the voucher to another Category 2 NED family on the HRA's waiting list. Any subsequent turnover of that voucher must again be used for a Category 2 family on the HRA's waiting list, and the HRA is under the same obligation to conduct outreach to Category 2 families if no such families are on the HRA's waiting list.

For HRAs that received both Category 1 and Category 2 vouchers, if at any time the HRA is serving fewer Category 2 families than the number of Category 2 HCVs awarded under the NOFA, when a Category 2 family applies to the waiting list and is found eligible, the HRA must issue the next NED voucher to that family. HUD monitors the initial leasing and reissuance of Category 2 HCVs. These vouchers may be recaptured and reassigned if not leased properly and in a timely manner.

All NED vouchers should be affirmatively marketed to a diverse population of NED-eligible families to attract protected classes least likely to apply. If at any time following the turnover of a NED HCV an HRA believes it is not practicable to assist NED families, the HRA must contact HUD.

## **19-V.D. LEASE UP [Notice PIH 2013-19]**

### **Briefings**

In addition to providing families with a disabled person a list of accessible units known to the HRA, HUD encourages, but does not require, HRAs to provide additional resources to NED families as part of the briefing.

HRA Policy

### **Voucher Term**

While the HRA is not required to establish different policies for the initial term of the voucher for NED vouchers, HUD has encouraged HRAs with NED vouchers to be generous in establishing reasonable initial search terms and subsequent extensions for families with a disabled person.

HRA Policy

### **Special Housing Types [Notice PIH 2013-19 and NED Category 2 FAQs]**

In general, an HRA is not required to permit families to use any of the special housing types and may limit the number of families using such housing. However, the HRA must permit the use of a special housing type if doing so provides a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by a person with disabilities.

Such special housing types include single room occupancy housing, congregate housing, group homes, shared housing, cooperative housing, and manufactured homes when the family owns the home and leases the manufactured home space.

Persons with disabilities transitioning out of institutional settings may choose housing in the community that is in a group or shared environment or where some additional assistance for daily living is provided for them on site. Under HUD regulations, group homes and shared housing are considered special housing types and are not excluded as an eligible housing type in the HCV program. Assisted living facilities are also considered eligible housing under the normal HCV program rules, as long as the costs for meals and other supportive services are not included in the housing assistance payments (HAP) made by the HRA to the owner, and as long as the person does not need continual medical or nursing care.

### **19-V.E. PORTABILITY [NED Category 2 FAQs]**

NED voucher participants are eligible for portability under standard portability rules and all HRA policies regarding portability in Chapter 10, Part II apply to NED families. However, the HRA may, but is not required to, allow applicant NED families to move under portability, even if the family did not have legal residency in the initial HRA's jurisdiction when they applied.

#### HRA Policy



**Temporary Policy Supplement**  
**EMERGENCY HOUSING VOUCHERS (EHVs)**

**INTRODUCTION**

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) (P.L. 117-2). Section 3202 of the ARP appropriated \$5 billion for the creation, administration, and renewal of new incremental emergency housing vouchers (EHVs) and other eligible expenses related to COVID-19.

On May 5, 2021, HUD issued Notice PIH 2021-15, which described HUD's process for allocating approximately 70,000 EHVs to eligible HRAs and set forth the operating requirements for HRAs who administer them. Based on criteria outlined in the notice, HUD notified eligible HRAs of the number of EHVs allocated to their agency, and HRAs were able to accept or decline the invitation to participate in the program.

HRAs may not project-base EHVs; EHVs are exclusively tenant-based assistance.

All applicable nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements apply to the EHV program, including requirements that the HRA grant reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities, effectively communicate with persons with disabilities, and ensure meaningful access for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP).

This chapter describes HUD regulations and HRA policies for administering EHVs. The policies outlined in this chapter are organized into seven sections, as follows:

Part I: Funding

Part II: Partnering Agencies

Part III: Waiting List Management

Part IV: Family Eligibility

Part V: Housing Search and Leasing

Part VI: Use of Funds, Reporting, and Financial Records

Except as addressed by this chapter and as required under federal statute and HUD requirements, the general requirements of the HCV program apply to EHVs.



## **PART I: FUNDING**

### **TPS-I.A. FUNDING OVERVIEW**

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) provides administrative fees and funding for the costs of administering emergency housing vouchers (EHVs) and other eligible expenses defined in Notice PIH 2021-15. These fees may only be used for EHV administration and other eligible expenses and must not be used for or applied to other HRA programs or vouchers. The HRA must maintain separate financial records from its regular HCV funding for all EHV funding.

#### **Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Funding**

ARP funding obligated to the HRA as housing assistance payments (HAP) funding may only be used for eligible EHV HAP expenses (i.e., rental assistance payments). EHV HAP funding may not be used for EHV administrative expenses or for the eligible uses under the EHV services fee.

The initial funding term will expire December 31, 2022. HUD will provide renewal funding to the HRA for the EHVs on a calendar year (CY) basis commencing with CY 2023. The renewal funding allocation will be based on the HRA's actual EHV HAP costs in leasing, similar to the renewal process for the regular HCV program. EHV renewal funding is not part of the annual HCV renewal funding formula; EHVs are renewed separately from the regular HCV program. All renewal funding for the duration of the EHV program has been appropriated as part of the ARP funding.

#### **Administrative Fee and Funding**

The following four types of fees and funding are allocated as part of the EHV program:

- **Preliminary fees** support immediate start-up costs that the HRA will incur in implementing alternative requirements under EHV, such as outreach and coordination with partnering agencies:
  - \$400 per EHV allocated to the HRA, once the consolidated annual contributions contract (CACC) is amended.
  - This fee may be used for any eligible administrative expenses related to EHVs.
  - The fee may also be used to pay for any eligible activities under EHV service fees (TPS-I.B).

- **Placement fees/expedited issuance reporting fees** will support initial lease-up costs and the added cost and effort required to expedite leasing of EHV's:
  - \$100 for each EHV initially leased, if the HRA reports the voucher issuance date in Public Housing Information Center–Next Generation (PIC–NG) system within 14 days of voucher issuance or the date the system becomes available for reporting.
  - Placement fees:
    - o \$500 for each EHV family placed under a HAP contract effective within four months of the effective date of the ACC funding increment; or
    - o \$250 for each EHV family placed under a HAP contract effective after four months but less than six months after the effective date of the ACC funding increment.
    - o HUD will determine placement fees in the event of multiple EHV allocations and funding increment effective dates.
  - Placement/expedited issuance fees only apply to the initial leasing of the voucher; they are not paid for family moves or to turnover vouchers.
- **Ongoing administrative fees**, which are calculated in the same way as the standard HCV program:
  - HRAs are allocated administrative fees using the full column A administrative fee amount for each EHV under contract as of the first day of each month.
  - Ongoing EHV administrative fees may be subject to proration in future years, based on available EHV funding.
- **Services fees**, which are a one-time fee to support HRAs' efforts to implement and operate an effective EHV services program in its jurisdiction (TPS-I.B):
  - The fee is allocated once the HRA's CACC is amended to reflect EHV funding.
  - The amount allocated is \$3,500 for each EHV allocated.

## TPS-I.B. SERVICE FEES

Services fee funding must be initially used for defined eligible uses and not for other administrative expenses of operating the EHV program. Service fees fall into four categories:

- Housing search assistance
- Security deposit/utility deposit/rental application/holding fee uses
- Owner-related uses
- Other eligible uses such as moving expenses or tenant-readiness services

The HRA must establish the eligible uses and the parameters and requirements for service fees in the HRA's administrative plan.

### HRA Policy

The eligible uses for service fees include:

**Housing search assistance.** which may include activities such as, but not limited to, helping a family identify and visit potentially available units during their housing search, helping to find a unit that meets the household's disability-related needs, providing transportation and directions, assisting with the completion of rental applications and HRA forms, and helping to expedite the EHV leasing process for the family.

**Application fees/non-refundable administrative or processing fees.** The HRA may choose to assist the family with some or all these expenses.

**Security deposit assistance.** The amount of the security deposit assistance may not exceed the lesser of two months' rent to owner, the maximum-security deposit allowed under applicable state and/or local law, or the actual security deposit required by the owner. The HRA will pay the security deposit assistance directly to the owner.

**Utility deposit assistance/utility arrears.** The HRA may provide utility deposit assistance for some or all of the family's utility deposit expenses. Assistance can be provided for deposits (including connection fees) required for the utilities to be supplied by the tenant under the lease. The HRA will pay the utility deposit assistance directly to the utility company. In addition, some families may have large balances with gas, electric, water, sewer, or trash companies that will make it difficult if not impossible to establish services for tenant-supplied utilities. The HRA may also provide the family with assistance to help address these utility arrears to facilitate leasing.

**Owner incentive and/or retention payments.** The HRA may make incentive or retention payments to owners that agree to initially lease their unit to an EHV family and/or renew the lease of an EHV family.

Payments will be made as a single payment at the beginning of the assisted lease term (or lease renewal if a retention payment). Owner incentive and retentions payments are not housing assistance payments, are not part of the rent to owner, and are not taken into consideration when determining whether the rent for the unit is reasonable.

**Essential household items.** The PHA may use services fee funding to assist the family with some or all of the costs of acquiring essential household items such as tableware,

cooking equipment, beds or bedding, and essential sanitary products such as soap and toiletries.

**Renter's insurance if required by the lease.** The HRA may choose to assist the family with some or all this cost.

Any services fee assistance that is returned to the HRA after its initial or subsequent use may only be applied to the eligible services fee uses defined in Notice PIH 2021-15 (or subsequent notice) or other EHV administrative costs. Any amounts not expended for these eligible uses when the HRA's EHV program ends must be remitted to HUD.

## **PART II: PARTNERING AGENCIES**

### **TPS-II.A. CONTINUUM OF CARE (CoC)**

HRAs that accept an allocation of EHV's are required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Continuum of Care (CoC) to establish a partnership for the administration of EHV's.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA has entered into an MOU with Central Minnesota Continuum of Care (CoC). See Exhibit TPS-1 for a copy of the MOU.

### **TPS-II.B. OTHER PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS**

The HRA may, but is not required to, partner with other organizations trusted by persons experiencing homelessness, such as victim services providers (VSPs) and other community partners. If the HRA chooses to partner with such agencies, the HRA must either enter into an MOU with the partnering agency or the partnering agency may be added to the MOU between the HRA and CoC.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA has added Stearns County Human Services, Anna Marie's Alliance, Terebinth Refuge to the MOU between the HRA and CoC. See Exhibit TPS-1 for a copy of the MOU.

### **TPS-II.C. REFERRALS**

#### **CoC and Partnering Agency Referrals**

The primary responsibility of the CoC under the MOU with the HRA is to make direct referrals of qualifying individuals and families to the HRA. The HRA must generally refer a family that is seeking EHV assistance directly from the HRA to the CoC or other referring agency for initial intake, assessment, and possible referral for EHV assistance. Partner CoCs are responsible for determining whether the family qualifies under one of the four eligibility categories for EHV's. The CoC or other direct referral partner must provide supporting documentation to the HRA of the referring agency's verification that the family meets one of the four eligible categories for EHV assistance.

## HRA Policy

The CoC or partnering agency must establish and implement a system to identify EHV-eligible individuals and families within the agency's caseload and make referrals to the HRA. The CoC or other partnering agency must certify that the EHV applicants they refer to the HRA meet at least one of the four EHV eligibility criteria. The HRA will maintain a copy of the referral or certification from the CoC or other partnering agency in the participant's file along with other eligibility paperwork. Homeless service providers must use the certification form found in Exhibit TPS-2 of this chapter. Victim services providers must use the certification form found in Exhibit TPS-3 of this chapter when identifying eligible families who qualify as victims of human trafficking.

As part of the MOU, the HRA and CoC or other partnering agency will identify staff positions to serve as lead EHV liaisons. These positions will be responsible for transmission and acceptance of referrals. The CoC or partnering agency must commit sufficient staff and resources to ensure eligible individuals and families are identified and determined eligible in a timely manner.

The HRA liaison responsible for acceptance of referrals will contact the CoC or partnering agency liaison via email indicating the number of vouchers available and requesting an appropriate number of referrals. No more than five business days from the date the CoC or partnering agency receives this notification, the CoC or partnering agency liaison will provide the HRA with a list of eligible referrals including the name, address, and contact phone number for each adult individual who is being referred; a completed release form for each adult family member; and a written certification for each referral indicating they are EHV-eligible.

### **Offers of Assistance with CoC Referral**

The HRA may make an EHV available without a referral from the CoC or other partnering organization in order to facilitate an emergency transfer under VAWA in accordance with the HRA's Emergency Transfer Plan (ETP) in Chapter 16.

The HRA must also take direct referrals from outside the CoC if:

- The CoC does not have a sufficient number of eligible families to refer to the HRA; or
- The CoC does not identify families that may be eligible for EHV assistance because they are fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking.

If at any time the HRA is not receiving enough referrals or is not receiving referrals in a timely manner from the CoC or other partner referral agencies (or the HRA and CoC cannot identify any such alternative referral partner agencies), HUD may permit the HRA on a temporary or permanent basis to take EHV applications directly from applicants and admit eligible families to the EHV program in lieu of or in addition to direct referrals in those circumstances.



## **PART III: WAITING LIST MANAGEMENT**

### **TPS-III. A. HCV WAITING LIST**

The regulation that requires the HRA to admit applicants as waiting list admissions or special admissions in accordance with admission policies in Chapter 4 does not apply to HRAs operating the EHV program. Direct referrals are not added to the HRA's HCV waiting list.

The HRA must inform families on the HCV waiting list of the availability of EHV by, at a minimum, either by posting the information to their website or providing public notice in their respective communities in accordance with the requirements listed in Notice PIH 2021-15.

#### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will post information about the EHV program for families on the HRA's HCV waiting list on their website. The notice will:

- Describe the eligible populations to which EHV are limited

- Clearly state that the availability of these EHV is managed through a direct referral process

- Advise the family to contact the CoC (or any other HRA referral partner, if applicable) if the family believes they may be eligible for EHV assistance

The HRA will ensure effective communication with persons with disabilities, including those with vision, hearing, and other communication-related disabilities in accordance with Chapter 2. The HRA will also take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) in accordance with Chapter 2.

### **TPS-III.B. EHV WAITING LIST**

The HCV regulations requiring the HRA to operate a single waiting list for admission to the HCV program do not apply to HRAs operating the EHV program. Instead, when the number of applicants referred by the CoC or partnering agency exceeds the EHV available, the HRA must maintain a separate waiting list for EHV referrals, both at initial leasing and for any turnover vouchers that may be issued prior to September 30, 2023.

Further, the EHV waiting list is not subject to HRA policies in Chapter 4 regarding opening and closing the HCV waiting list. The HRA will work directly with its CoC and other referral agency partners to manage the number of referrals and the size of the EHV waiting list.

## **TPS-III.C. PREFERENCES**

### **HCV Waiting List Preferences**

If local preferences are established by the HRA for HCV, they do not apply to EHV. However, if the HRA has a homeless preference or a VAWA preference for the HCV waiting list, the HRA must adopt additional policies related to EHV in accordance with Notice PIH 2021-15.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA does not offer either a homeless or a VAWA preference for the HCV waiting list.

### **EHV Waiting List Preferences**

With the exception of a residency preference, the HRA may choose, in coordination with the CoC and other referral partners, to establish separate local preferences for EHV. The HRA may, however, choose to not establish any local preferences for the EHV waiting list.

#### HRA Policy

No local preferences have been established for the EHV waiting list.

## **PART IV: FAMILY ELIGIBILITY**

### **TPS-IV.A. OVERVIEW**

The CoC or referring agency determines whether the individual or family meets any one of the four eligibility criteria described in Notice PIH 2021-15 and then refers the family to the HRA. The HRA determines that the family meets other eligibility criteria for the HCV program, as modified for the EHV program and outlined below.

### **TPS-IV.B. REFERRING AGENCY DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY**

In order to be eligible for an EHV, an individual or family must meet one of four eligibility criteria:

- Homeless as defined in 24 CFR 578.3;
- At risk of homelessness as defined in 24 CFR 578.3;
- Fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking (as defined in Notice PIH 2021-15), or human trafficking (as defined in the 22 U.S.C. Section 7102); or
- Recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability as determined by the CoC or its designee in accordance with the definition in Notice PIH 2021-15.

As applicable, the CoC or referring agency must provide documentation to the HRA of the referring agency's verification that the family meets one of the four eligible categories for EHV assistance. The HRA must retain this documentation as part of the family's file.

## **TPS-IV.C. HRA SCREENING**

### **Overview**

HUD waived 24 CFR 982.552 and 982.553 in part for the EHV applicants and established alternative requirement for mandatory and permissive prohibitions of admissions. Except where applicable, HRA policies regarding denials in Chapter 3 of this policy do not apply to screening individuals and families for eligibility for an EHV. Instead, the EHV alternative requirement listed in this section will apply to all EHV applicants.

The mandatory and permissive prohibitions listed in Notice PIH 2021-15 and in this chapter, however, apply only when screening the individual or family for eligibility for an EHV. When adding a family member after the family has been placed under a HAP contract with EHV assistance, the regulations at 24 CFR 982.551(h)(2) apply. Other than the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child, the HRA must approve additional family members and may apply its regular HCV screening criteria in Chapter 3 in doing so.

### **Mandatory Denials**

Under alternative requirements for the EHV program, mandatory denials for EHV applicants include:

- 24 CFR 982.553(a)(1)(ii)(C), which prohibits admission if any household member has ever been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.
- 24 CFR 982.553(a)(2)(i), which prohibits admission to the program if any member of the household is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program.

The HRA must deny admission to the program if any member of the family fails to sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information as required by 24 CFR 982.552(b)(3) but should notify the family of the limited EHV grounds for denial of admission first.

### HRA Policy

While the HRA will deny admission to the program if any adult member (or head of household or spouse, regardless of age) fails to sign and submit consent forms, the HRA will first notify the family of the limited EHV grounds for denial of admission as part of the notice of denial that will be mailed to the family.

## **Permissive Denial**

Notice PIH 2021-15 lists permissive prohibitions for which the HRA may, but is not required to, deny admission to EHV families. The notice also lists prohibitions that, while allowable under the HCV program, may not be used to deny assistance for EHV families.

If the HRA intends to establish permissive prohibition policies for EHV applicants, the HRA must first consult with its CoC partner to understand the impact that the proposed prohibitions may have on referrals and must take the CoC's recommendations into consideration.

### HRA Policy

In consultation with the CoC, the HRA will apply permissive prohibition to the screening of EHV applicants. Determinations using permissive prohibitions will be made based on an individualized assessment of relevant mitigating information in accordance with policies in Section 3-III.E.

The HRA will establish the following permissive prohibitions:

If the HRA determines that any household member is currently engaged in, or has engaged in within the previous 12 months:

Violent criminal activity

Other criminal activity that may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or persons residing in the immediate vicinity

If any member of the family has committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program within the previous 12 months.

If the family engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior toward HRA personnel within the previous 12 months.

The HRA will also deny assistance to household members already receiving assistance from another program in accordance with Section 9.h. of Notice PIH 2021-15.

Prohibitions based on criminal activity for the eligible EHV populations regarding drug possession will be considered apart from criminal activity against persons (i.e., violent criminal activity).

In compliance with PIH 2021-15, the HRA **will not** deny an EHV applicant admission regardless of whether:

Any member of the family has been evicted from federally assisted housing in the last five years;

A HRA has ever terminated assistance under the program for any member of the family;

The family currently owes rent or other amounts to the HRA or to another HRA in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act;

The family has not reimbursed any HRA for amounts paid to an owner under a HAP contract for rent, damages to the unit, or other amounts owed by the family under the lease;

The family breached an agreement with the HRA to pay amounts owed to a HRA, or amounts paid to an owner by a HRA;

The family would otherwise be prohibited admission under alcohol abuse standards established by the HRA in accordance with 24 CFR 982.553(a)(3);

The HRA determines that any household member is currently engaged in or has engaged in during a reasonable time before the admission, drug-related criminal activity.

## **TPS-IV.D. INCOME VERIFICATION AT ADMISSION**

### **Self-Certification at Admission**

The requirement to obtain third-party verification of income in accordance with Notice PIH 2018-18 does not apply to the EHV program applicants at admission, and alternatively, HRAs may consider self-certification the highest form of income verification at admission. As such, HRA policies related to the verification of income in Section 7-I.B. do not apply to EHV families at admission. Instead, applicants must submit an affidavit attesting to their reported income, assets, expenses, and other factors that would affect an income eligibility determination.

Additionally, applicants may provide third-party documentation that represents the applicant's income within the 60-day period prior to admission or voucher issuance but is not dated within 60 days of the HRA's request.

#### HRA Policy

Any documents used for verification must be dated within the 60-day period prior to admission. The documents must not be damaged, altered, or in any way illegible.

Printouts from webpages are considered original documents.

Any family self-certifications must be made in a format acceptable to the HRA and must be signed by the family member whose information or status is being verified.

The HRA will incorporate additional procedures to remind families of the obligation to provide true and complete information in accordance with Chapter 14. The HRA will address any material discrepancies (i.e., unreported income or a substantial difference in reported income) that may arise later. The HRA may, but is not required to, offer the family a repayment agreement in accordance with Chapter 16. If the family fails to repay the excess subsidy, the HRA will terminate the family's assistance in accordance with the policies in Chapter 12.

## **Recently Conducted Income Determinations**

HRAs may accept income calculations and verifications from third-party providers or from an examination that the HRA conducted on behalf of the family for another subsidized housing program in lieu of conducting an initial examination of income as long as:

- The income was calculated in accordance with rules outlined at 24 CFR Part 5 and within the last six months; and
- The family certifies there has been no change in income or family composition in the interim.

### HRA Policy

The HRA will accept income calculations and verifications from third-party providers provided they meet the criteria outlined above.

The family certification must be made in a format acceptable to the HRA and must be signed by all adult family members whose information or status is being verified.

At the time of the family's annual reexamination the HRA must conduct the annual reexamination of income as outlined at 24 CFR 982.516 and HRA policies in Chapter 11.

## **EIV Income Validation**

Once HUD makes the EIV data available to HRAs under this waiver and alternative requirement, the HRA must:

- Review the EIV Income and Income Validation Tool (IVT) reports to confirm and validate family-reported income within 90 days of the PIC submission date;
- Print and maintain copies of the EIV Income and IVT Reports in the tenant file; and
- Resolve any income discrepancy with the family within 60 days of the EIV Income or IVT Report dates.

Prior to admission, HRAs must continue to use HUD's EIV system to search for all household members using the Existing Tenant Search in accordance with HRA policies in Chapter 3.

If a HRA later determines that an ineligible family received assistance, the HRA must take steps to terminate that family from the program in accordance with Chapter 12.



#### **TPS-IV.E. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER AND CITIZENSHIP STATUS VERIFICATION**

For the EHV program, the HRA is not required to obtain and verify SSN documentation and documentation evidencing eligible noncitizen status before admitting the family to the EHV program. Instead, HRAs may adopt policies to admit EHV applicants who are unable to provide the required SSN or citizenship documentation during the initial eligibility determination. As an alternative requirement, such individuals must provide the required documentation within 180 days of admission to be eligible for continued assistance, pending verification, unless the HRA provides an extension based on evidence from the family or confirmation from the CoC or other partnering agency that the family has made a good-faith effort to obtain the documentation.

If a HRA determines that an ineligible family received assistance, the HRA must take steps to terminate that family from the program.

##### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will admit EHV applicants who are unable to provide the required SSN or citizenship documentation during the initial eligibility determination. These individuals must provide the required documentation in accordance with policies in Chapter 7 within 180 days of admission. The HRA may provide an additional 60-day extension based on evidence from the family or confirmation from the CoC or other partnering agency that the family has made a good-faith effort to obtain the documentation.

If the HRA determines that an ineligible family received assistance, the HRA will take steps to terminate that family from the program in accordance with policies in Chapter 12.

#### **TPS-IV.F. AGE AND DISABILITY VERIFICATION**

HRAs may accept self-certification of date of birth and disability status if a higher level of verification is not immediately available. If self-certification is used, the HRA must obtain a higher level of verification within 90 days of admission or verify the information in EIV.

If a HRA determines that an ineligible family received assistance, the HRA must take steps to terminate that family from the program.

##### **HRA Policy**

The HRA will accept self-certification of date of birth if a higher form of verification is not immediately available. The certification must be made in a format acceptable to the HRA and must be signed by the family member whose information or status is being verified. If self-certification is accepted, within 90 days of admission, the HRA will verify the information in EIV or through other third-party verification if the information is not available in EIV. The HRA will note the family's file that self-certification was used as initial verification and include an EIV printout or other third-party verification confirming the applicant's date of birth and/or disability status.

If the HRA determines that an ineligible family received assistance, the HRA will take steps to terminate that family from the program in accordance with policies in Chapter 12.

The HRA will not accept self-certification of disability status for EHV families. The HRA will follow HCV policies in Chapter 7 for verification.

#### **TPS-IV.G. INCOME TARGETING**

The HRA must determine income eligibility for EHV families in accordance with 24 CFR 982.201 and HRA policy in Chapter 3; however, income targeting requirements do not apply for EHV families. The HRA may still choose to include the admission of extremely low-income EHV families in its income targeting numbers for the fiscal year in which these families are admitted.

##### HRA Policy

The HRA will include the admission of extremely low-income EHV families in its income targeting numbers for the fiscal year in which these families are admitted.



## **PART V: HOUSING SEARCH AND LEASING**

### **TPS-V.A. INITIAL VOUCHER TERM**

Unlike the standard HCV program, which requires an initial voucher term of at least 60 days, EHV vouchers must have an initial search term of at least 120 days. HRA policies on extensions as outlined in Section 5-II.E. will apply.

#### HRA Policy

All EHV's will have an initial term of 120 calendar days.

The family must submit a Request for Tenancy Approval and proposed lease within the 120-day period unless the HRA grants an extension.

### **TPS-V.B. HOUSING SEARCH ASSISTANCE**

The HRA must ensure housing search assistance is made available to EHV families during their initial housing search. The housing search assistance may be provided directly by the HRA or through the CoC or another partnering agency or entity.

At a minimum, housing search assistance must:

- Help individual families identify potentially available units during their housing search, including physically accessible units with features for family members with disabilities, as well as units in low-poverty neighborhoods;
- Provide transportation assistance and directions to potential units;
- Conduct owner outreach;
- Assist with the completion of rental applications and HRA forms; and
- Help expedite the EHV leasing process for the family

### HRA Policy

As identified in the MOU between the HRA and CoC, the following housing search assistance will be provided to each EHV family:

The HRA will:

- Conduct owner outreach in accordance with policies in Chapter 13
- Provide directions to potential units as part of the EHV briefing packet
- Expedite the EHV leasing process for the family to the extent practicable and in accordance with policies in this chapter
- At least every 30 days, conduct proactive check-ins via email and telephone with families who are searching with an EHV and remind them of their voucher expiration date
- Assign a dedicated landlord liaison for EHV voucher families

The CoC will:

- Help families identify potentially available units during their housing search, including physically accessible units with features for family members with disabilities, as well as units in low-poverty neighborhoods
- Provide transportation assistance to potential units
- Assist the family with the completion of rental applications and HRA forms

### **TPS-V.C. HQS PRE-INSPECTIONS**

To expedite the leasing process, HRAs may pre-inspect available units that EHV families may be interested in leasing in order to maintain a pool of eligible units.

#### HRA Policy

The HRA will not conduct any pre-inspections of available units. The HRA will make every effort to fast-track the inspection process, including adjusting the normal inspection schedule for any required reinspections.

## **TPS-V.D. INITIAL LEASE TERM**

Unlike in the standard the HCV program, EHV voucher holders may enter into an initial lease that is for less than 12 months, regardless of the HRA policy in Section 9-I.E., Term of Assisted Tenancy.

## **TPS-V.E. PORTABILITY**

The normal HCV portability procedures and requirements outlined in Chapter 10 generally apply to EHV. Exceptions are addressed below.

### **Nonresident Applicants**

Under EHV, applicant families may move under portability even if the family did not have legal residency in the jurisdiction of the initial HRA when they applied, regardless of HRA policy in Section 10-II.B.

### **Billing and Absorption**

A receiving HRA cannot refuse to assist an incoming EHV family, regardless of whether the HRA administers EHV under its own ACC.

- If the EHV family moves under portability to another HRA that administers EHV under its own ACC:
  - The receiving HRA may only absorb the incoming EHV family with an EHV (assuming it has an EHV voucher available to do so).
  - If the HRA does not have an EHV available to absorb the family, it must bill the initial HRA. The receiving HRA must allow the family to lease the unit with EHV assistance and may not absorb the family with a regular HCV when the family leases the unit.
  - Regardless of whether the receiving HRA absorbs or bills the initial HRA for the family's EHV assistance, the EHV administration of the voucher is in accordance with the receiving HRA's EHV policies.
- If the EHV family moves under portability to another HRA that does not administer EHV under its own ACC, the receiving HRA may absorb the family into its regular HCV program or may bill the initial HRA.

## **Family Briefing**

In addition to the applicable family briefing requirements at 24 CFR 982.301(a)(2) as to how portability works and how portability may affect the family's assistance, the initial HRA must inform the family how portability may impact the special EHV services and assistance that may be available to the family.

The initial HRA is required to help facilitate the family's portability move to the receiving HRA and inform the family of this requirement in writing, taking reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP).

### HRA Policy

In addition to following HRA policy on briefings in Chapter 5, as part of the briefing packet for EHV families, the HRA will include a written notice that the HRA will assist the family with moves under portability.

For limited English proficient (LEP) applicants, the HRA will provide interpretation services in accordance with the HRA's LEP plan (See Chapter 2).

## **Coordination of Services**

If the portability move is in connection with the EHV family's initial lease-up, the receiving HRA and the initial HRA must consult and coordinate on the EHV services and assistance that will be made available to the family.

### HRA Policy

For EHV families who are exercising portability, when the HRA contacts the receiving HRA in accordance with Section 10-II.B. Preapproval Contact with Receiving HRA, the HRA will consult and coordinate with the receiving HRA to ensure there is no duplication of EHV services and assistance, and ensure the receiving HRA is aware of the maximum amount of services fee funding that the initial HRA may provide to the receiving HRA on behalf of the family.



## **Services Fee**

Standard portability billing arrangements apply for HAP and ongoing administrative fees for EHV families.

For service fees funding, the amount of the service fee provided by the initial HRA may not exceed the lesser of the actual cost of the services and assistance provided to the family by the receiving HRA or \$1,750, unless the initial HRA and receiving HRA mutually agree to change the \$1,750 cap. Service fees are paid as follows:

- If the receiving HRA, in consultation and coordination with the initial HRA, will provide eligible services or assistance to the incoming EHV family, the receiving HRA may be compensated for those costs by the initial HRA, regardless of whether the receiving HRA bills or absorbs.
- If the receiving HRA administers EHV's, the receiving HRA may use its own services fee and may be reimbursed by the initial HRA, or the initial HRA may provide the services funding upfront to the receiving HRA for those fees and assistance.
- If the receiving HRA does not administer EHV's, the initial HRA must provide the services funding upfront to the receiving HRA. Any amounts provided to the receiving HRA that are not used for services or assistance on behalf of the EHV family must promptly be returned by the receiving HRA to the initial HRA.

## **Placement Fee/Issuance Reporting Fee**

If the portability lease-up qualifies for the placement fee/issuance reporting fee, the receiving HRA receives the full amount of the placement component of the placement fee/issuing reporting fee. The receiving HRA is eligible for the placement fee regardless of whether the receiving HRA bills the initial HRA or absorbs the family into its own program at initial lease-up. The initial HRA qualifies for the issuance reporting component of the placement fee/issuance reporting fee, as applicable.

## TPS-V.F. PAYMENT STANDARDS

### Payment Standard Schedule

For the EHV program, HUD has waived the regulation requiring a single payment standard for each unit size. Instead, the HRA may, but is not required to, establish separate higher payment standards for EHV's. Lower EHV payment standards are not permitted. If the HRA is increasing the regular HCV payment standard, the HRA must also increase the EHV payment standard if it would be otherwise lower than the new regular HCV payment standard. The separate EHV payment standard must comply with all other HCV requirements with the exception of the alternative requirements discussed below.

Further, if the HRA chooses to establish higher payments standards for EHV's, HUD has provided other regulatory waivers:

- Defining the "basic range" for payment standards as between 90 and 120 percent of the published Fair Market Rent (FMR) for the unit size (rather than 90 to 110 percent).
- Allowing a HRA that is not in a designated Small Area FMR (SAFMR) area or has not opted to voluntarily implement SAFMRs to establish exception payment standards for a ZIP code area above the basic range for the metropolitan FMR based on the HUD published SAFMRs. The HRA may establish an exception payment standard up to 120 percent (as opposed to 110 percent) of the HUD published Small Area FMR for that ZIP code area. The exception payment standard must apply to the entire ZIP code area.
- The HRA must notify HUD if it establishes an EHV exception payment standard based on the SAFMR.

### HRA Policy

The HRA will implement higher payment standards for EHV's. The EHV payment standards are as follows:

City of St. Cloud	Sherburne and Wright Counties
0 Bedroom - \$720	0 Bedroom - \$848
1 Bedroom - \$805	1 Bedroom - \$981
2 Bedroom - \$985	2 Bedroom - \$1,215
3 Bedroom - \$1,392	3 Bedroom - \$1,705
4 Bedroom - \$1,628	4 Bedroom - \$1,980
5 Bedroom - \$1,800	5 Bedroom - \$2,260
6 Bedroom - \$2,000	6 Bedroom - \$2,545
7 Bedroom - \$2,100	7 Bedroom - \$2,840

At no time will the EHV payment standards fall below the HCV payment standards. If the HRA increases the HCV payment standard, the HRA will also increase the EHV payment standard if it would be otherwise lower than the new regular HCV payment standard.

## **Rent Reasonableness**

All rent reasonableness requirements apply to EHV units, regardless of whether the HRA has established an alternative or exception EHV payment standard.

## **Increases in Payment Standards**

The requirement that the HRA apply increased payment standards at the family's first regular recertification on or after the effective date of the increase does not apply to EHV. The HRA may, but is not required to, establish an alternative policy on when to apply the increased payment standard, provided the increased payment standard is used to calculate the HAP no later than the effective date of the family's first regular reexamination following the change.

### HRA Policy

The HRA will not establish an alternative policy for increases in the payment standard. HRA policy in Section 11-III.B. governing increases in payment standards will apply to EHV.

## **TPS-V.G. TERMINATION OF VOUCHERS**

After September 30, 2023, an HRA may not reissue EHV's when assistance for an EHV-assisted family ends. This means that when an EHV participant (a family that is receiving rental assistance under a HAP contract) leaves the program for any reason, the HRA may not reissue that EHV to another family unless it does so no later than September 30, 2023.

If an applicant family that was issued the EHV is unsuccessful in finding a unit and the EHV expires after September 30, 2023, the EHV may not be reissued to another family.

All EHV's under lease on or after October 1, 2023, may not under any circumstances be reissued to another family when the participant leaves the program for any reason.

An EHV that has never been issued to a family may be initially issued and leased after September 30, 2023, since this prohibition only applies to EHV's that are being reissued upon turnover after assistance to a family has ended. However, HUD may direct HRAs administering EHV's to cease leasing any unleased EHV's if such action is determined necessary by HUD to ensure there will be sufficient funding available to continue to cover the HAP needs of currently assisted EHV families.

## **PART VI: USE OF FUNDS, REPORTING, AND FINANCIAL RECORDS**

EHV funds allocated to the HRA for HAP (both funding for the initial allocation and HAP renewal funding) may only be used for eligible EHV HAP purposes. EHV HAP funding obligated to the HRA may not be used for EHV administrative expenses or the other EHV eligible expenses under this notice. Likewise, EHV administrative fees and funding obligated to the HRA are to be used for those purposes and must not be used for HAP.

The appropriated funds for EHV are separate from the regular HCV program and may not be used for the regular HCV program but may only be expended for EHV eligible purposes. EHV HAP funds may not roll into the regular HCV restricted net position (RNP) and must be tracked and accounted for separately as EHV RNP. EHV administrative fees and funding for other eligible expenses permitted by Notice PIH 2021-15 may only be used in support of the EHV and cannot be used for regular HCVs. EHV funding may not be used for the repayment of debts or any amounts owed to HUD by HUD program participants including, but not limited to, those resulting from Office of Inspector General (OIG), Quality Assurance Division (QAD), or other monitoring review findings.

The HRA must comply with EHV reporting requirements in the Voucher Management System (VMS) and Financial Data Schedule (FDS) as outlined in Notice PIH 2021-15.

The HRA must maintain complete and accurate accounts and other records for the program and provide HUD and the Comptroller General of the United States full and free access to all accounts and records that are pertinent the administration of the EHV in accordance with the HCV program requirements at 24 CFR 982.158.



## Exhibit TPS-1: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

### Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been created and entered into on June 1, 2021, by the Housing & Redevelopment Authority of St. Cloud (St. Cloud HRA), 1225 W. St. Germain, St. Cloud, MN 56301 and the Central Minnesota Continuum of Care (CoC), 37 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, Suite 102, St. Cloud, MN 56303

#### I. Introduction and Goals

- a. The St. Cloud HRA and the CoC are committed to administering the Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) in accordance with all program requirements including relevant PIH Notices.
- b. The parties have established the following goals and standards of success in administering the program.
  1. At least 90 percent of the vouchers awarded to the St. Cloud HRA will be fully leased on or before 12/1/2021;
  2. The St. Cloud HRA will coordinate with the CoC access points to match households with services they are eligible to receive including mainstream resources;
  2. A minimum of 90% of the EHV participants will successfully remain housed for at least one year.
- c. The following staff position will serve as the lead EHV liaisons.
  1. Lori Lygre, Voucher Programs Manager, St. Cloud HRA
  3. Tim Poland, Continuum of Care Coordinator

#### II. Eligible Participants in the Emergency Housing Voucher Program

The Central Minnesota Continuum of Care will refer the following households to St. Cloud HRA. The definitions for the below categories are as defined in Notice PIH 2021-15.

Households will be verified and referred by the CES in the following preference order:

- a. Homeless
- b. At risk of homelessness
- c. Fleeing or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking
- d. Recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability including but not limited to participants in rapid rehousing, and permanent

supportive housing, or other time- limited housing programs who entered these programs through the CES and were homeless prior to entry.

III. Services to be provided to eligible EHV families

- a. Housing search assistance will include assisting the families identify and visit potential units, providing transportation, assisting with completing applications, and expediting the leasing process.
- b. Referral to resources for security deposits, application fees, and utility deposit assistance or arrears. If no other resources are readily available to quickly exit the household from homelessness, these may be paid by the HRA or its subgrantee.
- c. Referral to resources for moving assistance, credit counseling, essential household items, or renter's insurance. If no other resources are readily available to quickly exit the household from homelessness, these may be paid by the HRA or its subgrantee.
- d. Assessment and referral to other mainstream resources occur as part of the Coordinated Entry process.
- e. Conduct owner outreach with current or new landlords/property owners.

IV. St. Cloud HRA's Roles and Responsibilities

- a. Coordinate and consult with the CoC in developing the services and assistance to be offered under the EHV services fee.
- b. Accept direct referrals for eligible individuals and families through the CoC Coordinated Entry System.
- c. Commit a sufficient number of staff and necessary resources to ensure that the application, certification, and voucher issuance processes are completed in a timely manner.
- d. Commit a sufficient number of staff and resources to ensure that inspections of units are completed in a timely manner.
- e. Designate a staff to serve as the lead EHV liaison.
- f. Comply with the provisions of this MOU.

V. CoC Roles and Responsibilities

- a. Designate and maintain a lead EHV liaison to communicate with St. Cloud HRA.
- b. Refer eligible individuals and families to the St. Cloud HRA using the community's coordinated entry system.



- c. Comply with the provisions of this MOU.

VI. Program Evaluation

The St. Cloud HRA and the Central Minnesota CoC agree to cooperate with HUD, provide requested data to HUD or HUD-approved contractor delegated the responsibility of program evaluation protocols established by HUD or HUD-approved contractor, including possible random assignment procedures.

Signed by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Louise Reis  
Executive Director, St. Cloud HRA

6-1-2021  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tim Poland  
Coordinator, Central Minnesota CoC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

### **St. Cloud HRA – Stearns County Housing Search**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is between the St. Cloud Housing and Redevelopment Authority (hereby referred to as "HRA") and the Stearns County Department of Human Services (hereby referred to as "County") for the objective of finding permanent rental housing in the St. Cloud and greater St. Cloud area utilizing Section 8 - Housing Choice Vouchers (hereby referred to as "HCV") and shall be effective the date of the last signature.

#### **Introduction and Goals:**

This MOU pertains to the relationship between HRA and County for the purpose of housing HCV eligible persons into permanent rental housing that will accept HCV as partial payment.

The HRA will utilize allotted CARES and Emergency Housing Voucher dollars to pay County to provide HCV housing search services.

The HRA affirmatively states that it is its sole responsibility to comply with the requirements of administration and distribution of HCV, CARES, and Emergency Housing Voucher funds.

Each party to this MOU agrees to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the other parties, their officers, officials, agents, volunteers and employees from any liability, claims, losses, damages, costs, judgments, expenses, including attorney and professional fees, resulting directly from any act or omission arising out of their responsibilities under this agreement. It is understood and agreed that Stearns County's liability shall be limited by the provisions of Minnesota Statutes Chapter 466 (Tort Liability, Political subdivisions) or other applicable law.

The HRA makes the commitment to cooperate with and assist the County with its housing search service for HCV persons. The HRA will ensure that all HCV eligible persons experiencing a housing crisis have fair and equal access and are quickly identified, assessed for, and referred to the County housing specialist for assistance based on client strengths and needs.

The County will commit sufficient resources based on availability of its resources to provide housing search efforts pursuant to this MOU.

The HRA and County have agreed to standards of success for administering the housing search service for which HRA will pay County. Standards of success are based on a maximum of five (5) hours of housing search services per initial contact with HCV persons at a reimbursable rate of \$35 per hour. If additional hours are required (exceeding the five (5) hours per initial contact as stated above) to complete a housing search, the County will email HRA staff for approval.

#### **Statement of Cooperation:**

The HRA and County agree to cooperate with HUD, provide requested data to HUD or HUD-approved contractor delegated the responsibility of program evaluation, and follow all evaluation protocols established by HUD or HUD-approved contractor, including possible random assignment procedures.

**HRA Responsibilities:**

1. The HRA will administer the HCV in accordance with applicable program regulations and requirements.
2. The HRA will refer HCV eligible persons to County Housing Resource Specialist.
3. The HRA will participate in monthly service report meetings with County Housing Resource Specialist and County supervisory staff. Monthly meetings will conclude with HRA agreeing to and accepting HCV housing search services report submitted by County.
4. The HRA will pay County based on accepted housing search services reports within 30 days of the HRA receiving an invoice from the County.


**County Responsibilities:**

1. The County will establish and implement a process to conduct HCV housing search in the St. Cloud and the greater St. Cloud area.
2. The County will accept and work with all HCV eligible persons referred to County by HRA and will notify HRA by email of said persons' contact within one working day of initial meeting with them.
3. The County will track and record for monthly reporting purposes to the HRA the following data pertaining to HCV eligible persons housing search efforts:
  - a. HCV eligible persons name(s);
  - b. Hours expended to conduct HCV eligible persons housing search;
  - c. Outcome of housing search effort (housed/not housed) and any issues/problems encountered during search effort; and
  - d. Barriers preventing successful conclusion of housing search or any missed resources that would have made for a successful housing search.
4. The County will work with HCV eligible persons to obtain all necessary Release Of Information (ROI) documents needed to conduct a housing search and coordinate housing agreements on behalf of the persons.
5. The County will participate in monthly service report meetings with HRA staff.

**Duration:**

This MOU will be in effect for one-year after date of the last signature. This MOU may be terminated prior to the last day of the MOU period by either party, with or without cause, by giving thirty (30) calendar days written notice to the other party.

ST. CLOUD HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

BY:   
Louise Reis  
Executive Director

Date: 5-26-21

STEARNS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Melissa Huberty, MSW, LICSW  
Human Services Administrator

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been created and entered into on June 3, 2021, by the Housing & Redevelopment Authority of St. Cloud (St. Cloud HRA), 1225 W. St. Germain, St. Cloud, MN 56301 and the Terebinth Refuge, 110 2<sup>nd</sup> Street South, Suite 231, Waite Park, MN 56387.

### I. Introduction and Goals

- a. The St. Cloud HRA and the Terebinth Refuge are committed to administering the Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) in accordance with all program requirements including relevant PIH Notices.
- b. The parties have established the following goals and standards of success in administering the program.
  1. At least 90 percent of the vouchers awarded to the St. Cloud HRA will be fully leased on or before 12/1/2021;
  2. The St. Cloud HRA will coordinate with the Terebinth Refuge access points to match households with services they are eligible to receive including mainstream resources;
  2. A minimum of 90% of the EHV participants will successfully remain housed for at least one year.
- c. The following staff position will serve as the lead EHV liaisons.
  1. Lori Lygre, Voucher Programs Manager, St. Cloud HRA
  2. Eleana Lukes, Case Manager

### II. Eligible Participants in the Emergency Housing Voucher Program

Terebinth Refuge will refer the following households to St. Cloud HRA. The definitions for the below categories are as defined in Notice PIH 2021-15.

Households will be verified and referred by Terebinth Refuge in the following preference order:

- a. Homeless
- b. At risk of homelessness
- c. Fleeing or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking
- d. Recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability including but not limited to participants in rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing, or other time-limited housing programs who entered

these programs through Terebinth Refuge and were homeless prior to entry.

III. Services to be provided to eligible EHV families

- a. Housing search assistance will include assisting the families identify and visit potential units, providing transportation, assisting with completing applications, and expediting the leasing process.
- b. Referral to resources for security deposits, application fees, and utility deposit assistance or arrears. If no other resources are readily available to quickly exit the household from homelessness, these may be paid by the HRA or its subgrantee.
- c. Referral to resources for moving assistance, credit counseling, essential household items, or renter's insurance. If no other resources are readily available to quickly exit the household from homelessness, these may be paid by the HRA or its subgrantee.
- d. Assessment and referral to other mainstream resources occur as part of the referral process.
- e. Conduct owner outreach with current or new landlords/property owners.

IV. St. Cloud HRA's Roles and Responsibilities

- a. Coordinate and consult with the Terebinth Refuge in developing the services and assistance to be offered under the EHV services fee.
- b. Accept direct referrals for eligible individuals and families through the Terebinth Refuge.
- c. Commit a sufficient number of staff and necessary resources to ensure that the application, certification, and voucher issuance processes are completed in a timely manner.
- d. Commit a sufficient number of staff and resources to ensure that inspections of units are completed in a timely manner.
- e. Designate a staff to serve as the lead EHV liaison.
- f. Comply with the provisions of this MOU.

V. Terebinth Refuge Roles and Responsibilities

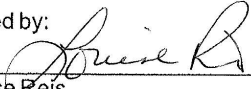
- a. Designate and maintain a lead EHV liaison to communicate with St. Cloud HRA.
- b. Refer eligible individuals and families to the St. Cloud HRA.

- c. Comply with the provisions of this MOU.

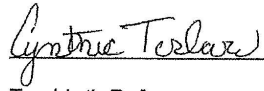
VI. Program Evaluation

The St. Cloud HRA and Terebinth Refuge agree to cooperate with HUD, provide requested data to HUD or HUD-approved contractor delegated the responsibility of program evaluation protocols established by HUD or HUD-approved contractor, including possible random assignment procedures.

Signed by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Louise Reis  
Executive Director, St. Cloud HRA

6-3-21  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Terebinth Refuge  
Cynthia Terlow  
Founder & Executive Director

6.2.21  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been created and entered into on July 26, 2021, by the Housing & Redevelopment Authority of St. Cloud (St. Cloud HRA), 1225 W. St. Germain, St. Cloud, MN 56301 and the Central Minnesota Saving Grace (Lutheran Social Service), St. Cloud HRA, St. Cloud, MN 56303

### I. Introduction and Goals

- a. The St. Cloud HRA and the Saving Grace are committed to administering the Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) in accordance with all program requirements including relevant PIH Notices.
- b. The parties have established the following goals and standards of success in administering the program.
  1. At least 90 percent of the vouchers awarded to the St. Cloud HRA will be fully leased on or before 12/1/2021;
  2. The St. Cloud HRA will coordinate with the Saving Grace access points to match households with services they are eligible to receive including mainstream resources;
  2. A minimum of 90% of the EHV participants will successfully remain housed for at least one year.
- c. The following staff position will serve as the lead EHV liaisons.
  1. Lori Lygre, Voucher Programs Manager, St. Cloud HRA
  2. Kate Lefage, Regional Navigator, LSS - Saving Grace

### II. Eligible Participants in the Emergency Housing Voucher Program

Saving Grace will refer the following households to St. Cloud HRA. The definitions for the below categories are as defined in Notice PIH 2021-15.

Households will be verified and referred by Saving Grace in the following preference order:

- a. Homeless
- b. At risk of homelessness
- c. Fleeing or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking
- d. Recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability including but not limited to participants in rapid rehousing, and permanent



supportive housing, or other time- limited housing programs who entered these programs through Saving Grace and were homeless prior to entry.

III. Services to be provided to eligible EHV families

- a. Housing search assistance will include assisting the families identify and visit potential units, providing transportation, assisting with completing applications, and expediting the leasing process.
- b. Referral to resources for security deposits, application fees, and utility deposit assistance or arrears. If no other resources are readily available to quickly exit the household from homelessness, these may be paid by the HRA or its subgrantee.
- c. Referral to resources for moving assistance, credit counseling, essential household items, or renter's insurance. If no other resources are readily available to quickly exit the household from homelessness, these may be paid by the HRA or its subgrantee.
- d. Assessment and referral to other mainstream resources occur as part of the Coordinated Entry process.
- e. Conduct owner outreach with current or new landlords/property owners.

IV. St. Cloud HRA's Roles and Responsibilities

- a. Coordinate and consult with the Saving Grace in developing the services and assistance to be offered under the EHV services fee.
- b. Accept direct referrals for eligible individuals and families through the Saving Grace.
- c. Commit a sufficient number of staff and necessary resources to ensure that the application, certification, and voucher issuance processes are completed in a timely manner.
- d. Commit a sufficient number of staff and resources to ensure that inspections of units are completed in a timely manner.
- e. Designate a staff to serve as the lead EHV liaison.
- f. Comply with the provisions of this MOU.

V. Saving Grace Roles and Responsibilities

- a. Designate and maintain a lead EHV liaison to communicate with St. Cloud HRA.
- b. Refer eligible individuals and families to the St. Cloud HRA .

- c. Comply with the provisions of this MOU.

VI. Program Evaluation

The St. Cloud HRA and Saving Grace agree to cooperate with HUD, provide requested data to HUD or HUD-approved contractor delegated the responsibility of program evaluation protocols established by HUD or HUD-approved contractor, including possible random assignment procedures.

Signed by:

Louise Reis

7/27/2021

Louise Reis  
Executive Director, St. Cloud HRA

Date

Maureen E. Warren

7/26/2021

Maureen E. Warren  
VP & Chief Family Services Officer  
Lutheran Social Service of MN

Date

## Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been created and entered into on July 9, 2021, by the Housing & Redevelopment Authority of St. Cloud (St. Cloud HRA), 1225 W. St. Germain, St. Cloud, MN 56301 and the Anna Marie's Alliance, PO Box 367, St. Cloud, MN 56303.

### I. Introduction and Goals

- a. The St. Cloud HRA and the Anna Marie's Alliance are committed to administering the Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) in accordance with all program requirements including relevant PIH Notices.
- b. The parties have established the following goals and standards of success in administering the program.
  1. At least 90 percent of the vouchers awarded to the St. Cloud HRA will be fully leased on or before 12/1/2021;
  2. The St. Cloud HRA will coordinate with the Anna Marie's Alliance access points to match households with services they are eligible to receive including mainstream resources;
  2. A minimum of 90% of the EHV participants will successfully remain housed for at least one year.
- c. The following staff position will serve as the lead EHV liaisons.
  1. Lori Lygre, Voucher Programs Manager, St. Cloud HRA
  2. Ashley Schaber, Shelter Manager, Anna Marie's

### II. Eligible Participants in the Emergency Housing Voucher Program

Anna Marie's Alliance will refer the following households to St. Cloud HRA. The definitions for the below categories are as defined in Notice PIH 2021-15.

Households will be verified and referred by Anna Marie's Alliance in the following preference order:

- a. Homeless
- b. At risk of homelessness
- c. Fleeing or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking
- d. Recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability including but not limited to participants in rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing, or other time- limited housing programs who entered

these programs through Anna Marie's Alliance and were homeless prior to entry.

III. Services to be provided to eligible EHV families

- a. Housing search assistance will include assisting the families identify and visit potential units, providing transportation, assisting with completing applications, and expediting the leasing process.
- b. Referral to resources for security deposits, application fees, and utility deposit assistance or arrears. If no other resources are readily available to quickly exit the household from homelessness, these may be paid by the HRA or its subgrantee.
- c. Referral to resources for moving assistance, credit counseling, essential household items, or renter's insurance. If no other resources are readily available to quickly exit the household from homelessness, these may be paid by the HRA or its subgrantee.
- d. Assessment and referral to other mainstream resources occur as part of the Coordinated Entry process.
- e. Conduct owner outreach with current or new landlords/property owners.

IV. St. Cloud HRA's Roles and Responsibilities

- a. Coordinate and consult with the Anna Marie's Alliance in developing the services and assistance to be offered under the EHV services fee.
- b. Accept direct referrals for eligible individuals and families through the Anna Marie's Alliance.
- c. Commit a sufficient number of staff and necessary resources to ensure that the application, certification, and voucher issuance processes are completed in a timely manner.
- d. Commit a sufficient number of staff and resources to ensure that inspections of units are completed in a timely manner.
- e. Designate a staff to serve as the lead EHV liaison.
- f. Comply with the provisions of this MOU.

V. Anna Marie's Alliance Roles and Responsibilities

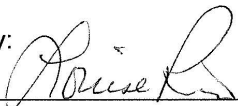
- a. Designate and maintain a lead EHV liaison to communicate with St. Cloud HRA.
- b. Refer eligible individuals and families to the St. Cloud HRA .

- c. Comply with the provisions of this MOU.

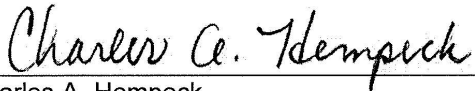
VI. Program Evaluation

The St. Cloud HRA and Anna Marie's Alliance agree to cooperate with HUD, provide requested data to HUD or HUD-approved contractor delegated the responsibility of program evaluation protocols established by HUD or HUD-approved contractor, including possible random assignment procedures.

Signed by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Louise Reis  
Executive Director, St. Cloud HRA

7-9-2021  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Charles A. Hempeck  
Executive Director, Anna Marie's Alliance

7.9.2021  
Date



## Exhibit TPS-2: HOMELESS PROVIDER'S CERTIFICATION

### Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Homeless Certification

EHV Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Household without dependent children

\_\_\_\_\_ Household with dependent children

Number of persons in the household \_\_\_\_\_

**This is to certify that the above named individual or household meets the following criteria based on the check mark, other indicated information, and signature indicating their current living situation-**

**Check only one box and complete only that section**

**Living Situation: place not meant for human habitation (e.g., cars, parks, abandoned buildings, streets/sidewalks)**

\_\_\_\_\_ The person(s) named above is/are currently living in (or, if currently in hospital or other institution, was living in immediately prior to hospital/institution admission) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus station, airport or camp ground.

Homeless Street Outreach Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*This certifying agency must be recognized by Central MN Continuum of Care (CoC) as an agency that has a program designed to serve persons living on the street or other places not meant for human habitation. Examples may be street outreach workers, day shelters, soup kitchens, Health Care for the Homeless sites, etc.*

Authorized Agency Representative Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Living Situation: Emergency Shelter**

\_\_\_\_\_ The person(s) named above is/are currently living in (or, if currently in hospital or other institution, was living in immediately prior to hospital/institution admission) a supervised publicly or privately-operated shelter as follows:

Emergency Shelter Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*This emergency shelter must appear on the Central MN Continuum of Care's (CoC) Housing Inventory Chart as part of the most recent CoC Homeless Assistance application to HUD or otherwise be recognized by the CoC as part of the CoC Inventory (i.e., newly established Emergency Shelter).*

Authorized Agency Representative Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Living Situation: Recently Homeless**

\_\_\_\_\_ The person(s) named above is/are currently receiving financial and supportive services for persons who are homeless. Loss of such assistance would result in a return to homelessness (i.e. households in Rapid Rehousing programs, resident of Permanent Supportive Housing Programs participating in Moving On/Moving Up, etc.)

Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*This certifying agency must appear on the CoC's Housing Inventory Chart submitted as part of the most recent CoC Homeless Assistance application to HUD or otherwise be recognized by the CoC as part of the CoC inventory.*

Authorized Agency Representative Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(June 2021)





<b>Exhibit TPS-3: EXAMPLE OF A VICTIM SERVICES PROVIDER'S CERTIFICATION</b>
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Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV)  
Human Trafficking Certification

**Purpose of Form:**

The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 provides assistance to victims of trafficking making housing, educational health care, job training and other Federally-funded social service programs available to assist victims in rebuilding their lives.

**Use of This Optional Form:**

In response to this request, the service provider may complete this form and submit it to the St. Cloud HRA to certify eligibility for EHV assistance.

**Confidentiality:** All information provided to the service provider concerning the incident(s) of human trafficking shall be kept confidential and such details shall not be entered into any shared database. Employees of the St. Cloud HRA will not have access to these details, 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 ON BEHALF OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVOR**

EHV Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**This is to certify that the above named individual or household meets the definitions for persons who are fleeing or attempting to flee human trafficking under section 107(b) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.**

Immediately prior to entering the household's current living situation, the person(s) named above was/were residing in:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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(s) named above is/has been a victim of human trafficking. 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.

Authorized Agency Representative Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## GLOSSARY

### **A. ACRONYMS USED IN THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM**

<b>AAF</b>	Annual adjustment factor (published by HUD in the <i>Federal Register</i> and used to compute annual rent adjustments)
<b>ACC</b>	Annual contributions contract
<b>ADA</b>	Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
<b>BR</b>	Bedroom
<b>CDBG</b>	Community Development Block Grant (Program)
<b>CFR</b>	Code of Federal Regulations (published federal rules that define and implement laws; commonly referred to as “the regulations”)
<b>CPI</b>	Consumer price index (published monthly by the Department of Labor as an inflation indicator)
<b>EID</b>	Earned income disallowance
<b>EIV</b>	Enterprise Income Verification
<b>FDIC</b>	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
<b>FHA</b>	Federal Housing Administration (HUD Office of Housing)
<b>FHEO</b>	Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (HUD Office of)
<b>FICA</b>	Federal Insurance Contributions Act (established Social Security taxes)
<b>FMR</b>	Fair market rent
<b>FR</b>	Federal Register
<b>FSS</b>	Family Self-Sufficiency (Program)
<b>FY</b>	Fiscal year
<b>FYE</b>	Fiscal year end
<b>GAO</b>	Government Accountability Office
<b>GR</b>	Gross rent
<b>HA</b>	Housing authority or housing agency
<b>HAP</b>	Housing assistance payment
<b>HCV</b>	Housing choice voucher
<b>HQS</b>	Housing quality standards
<b>HRA</b>	Housing and Redevelopment Authority
<b>HUD</b>	Department of Housing and Urban Development
<b>HUDCLIPS</b>	HUD Client Information and Policy System

<b>IPA</b>	Independent public accountant
<b>IRA</b>	Individual retirement account
<b>IRS</b>	Internal Revenue Service
<b>JTPA</b>	Job Training Partnership Act
<b>LBP</b>	Lead-based paint
<b>LEP</b>	Limited English proficiency
<b>MSA</b>	Metropolitan statistical area (established by the U.S. Census Bureau)
<b>MTCS</b>	Multi-family Tenant Characteristics System (now the Form HUD-50058 submodule of the PIC system)
<b>MTW</b>	Moving to Work
<b>NOFA</b>	Notice of funding availability
<b>OGC</b>	HUD's Office of General Counsel
<b>OIG</b>	HUD's Office of Inspector General
<b>OMB</b>	Office of Management and Budget
<b>PASS</b>	Plan to Achieve Self-Support
<b>PHA</b>	Public housing agency
<b>PIC</b>	PIH Information Center
<b>PIH</b>	(HUD Office of) Public and Indian Housing
<b>PS</b>	Payment standard
<b>QC</b>	Quality control
<b>REAC</b>	(HUD) Real Estate Assessment Center
<b>RFP</b>	Request for proposals
<b>RFTA</b>	Request for tenancy approval
<b>RIGI</b>	Regional inspector general for investigation (handles fraud and program abuse matters for HUD at the regional office level)
<b>SEMAP</b>	Section 8 Management Assessment Program
<b>SRO</b>	Single room occupancy
<b>SSA</b>	Social Security Administration
<b>SSI</b>	Supplemental security income
<b>SWICA</b>	State wage information collection agency

<b>TANF</b>	Temporary assistance for needy families
<b>TPV</b>	Tenant protection vouchers
<b>TR</b>	Tenant rent
<b>TTP</b>	Total tenant payment
<b>UA</b>	Utility allowance
<b>UFAS</b>	Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards
<b>UIV</b>	Upfront income verification
<b>URP</b>	Utility reimbursement payment
<b>VAWA</b>	Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013

## **B. GLOSSARY OF SUBSIDIZED HOUSING TERMS**

***Absorption.*** In portability (under subpart H of this part 982): the point at which a receiving HRA stops billing the initial HRA for assistance on behalf of a portability family. The receiving HRA uses funds available under the receiving HRA consolidated ACC.

***Accessible.*** The facility or portion of the facility can be approached, entered, and used by persons with disabilities.

***Adjusted income.*** Annual income, less allowable HUD deductions and allowances.

***Administrative fee.*** Fee paid by HUD to the HRA for administration of the program. See §982.152.

***Administrative plan.*** The plan that describes HRA policies for administration of the tenant-based programs. The Administrative Plan and any revisions must be approved by the HRA's board and included as a supporting document to the HRA Plan. See §982.54.

***Admission.*** The point when the family becomes a participant in the program. The date used for this purpose is the effective date of the first HAP contract for a family (first day of initial lease term) in a tenant-based program.

***Affiliated individual.*** With respect to an individual, a spouse, parent, brother, sister, or child of that individual, or an individual to whom that individual stands in loco parentis (in the place of a parent), or any individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in the household of that individual

***Amortization payment.*** In a manufactured home space rental: The monthly debt service payment by the family to amortize the purchase price of the manufactured home.

***Annual.*** Happening once a year.

***Annual contributions contract (ACC).*** The written contract between HUD and an HRA under which HUD agrees to provide funding for a program under the 1937 Act, and the HRA agrees to comply with HUD requirements for the program.

***Annual income.*** The anticipated total income of an eligible family from all sources for the 12-month period following the date of determination of income, computed in accordance with the regulations.

***Applicant (applicant family).*** A family that has applied for admission to a program but is not yet a participant in the program.

***Area exception rent.*** An amount that exceeds the published FMR. See 24 CFR 982.504(b).

***As-paid states.*** States where the welfare agency adjusts the shelter and utility component of the welfare grant in accordance with actual housing costs.

***Assets.*** (See *net family assets*.)

***Auxiliary aids.*** Services or devices that enable persons with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills to have an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

***Biennial.*** Happening every two years.

***Bifurcate.*** 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.

***Budget authority.*** An amount authorized and appropriated by the Congress for payment to HRAs under the program. For each funding increment in an HRA program, budget authority is the maximum amount that may be paid by HUD to the HRA over the ACC term of the funding increment.

***Child.*** A member of the family other than the family head or spouse who is under 18 years of age.

***Child care expenses.*** 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.

***Citizen.*** A citizen or national of the United States.

***Cohead.*** An individual in the household who is equally responsible for the lease with the head of household. A family may have a cohead or spouse but not both. A cohead never qualifies as a dependent. The cohead must have legal capacity to enter into a lease.

***Common space.*** In shared housing, the space available for use by the assisted family and other occupants of the unit.

***Computer match.*** The automated comparison of databases containing records about individuals.

***Confirmatory review.*** An on-site review performed by HUD to verify the management performance of an HRA.

***Consent form.*** Any consent form approved by HUD to be signed by assistance applicants and participants to obtain income information from employers and SWICAs; return information from the Social Security Administration (including wages, net earnings from self-employment, and retirement income); and return information for unearned income from the IRS. Consent forms expire after a certain time and may authorize the collection of other information to determine eligibility or level of benefits.

***Congregate housing.*** Housing for elderly persons or persons with disabilities that meets the HQS for congregate housing. A special housing type: see 24 CFR 982.606–609.

***Contiguous MSA.*** In portability (under subpart H of part 982): An MSA that shares a common boundary with the MSA in which the jurisdiction of the initial HRA is located.

***Continuously assisted.*** An applicant is continuously assisted under the 1937 Act if the family is already receiving assistance under any 1937 Housing Act program when the family is admitted to the voucher program.

***Contract authority.*** The maximum annual payment by HUD to an HRA for a funding increment.

**Cooperative** (term includes mutual housing). Housing owned by a nonprofit corporation or association, and where a member of the corporation or association has the right to reside in a particular apartment, and to participate in management of the housing. A special housing type (see 24 CFR 982.619).

**Covered families.** Statutory term for families who are required to participate in a welfare agency economic self-sufficiency program and who may be subject to a welfare benefit sanction for noncompliance with this obligation. Includes families who receive welfare assistance or other public assistance 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 the assistance.

**Dating violence.** 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

**Dependent.** A member of the family (except foster children and foster adults) other than the family head or spouse, who is under 18 years of age, or is a person with a disability, or is a full-time student.

**Dependent child.** In the context of the student eligibility restrictions, a dependent child of a student enrolled in an institution of higher education. The dependent child must also meet the definition of *dependent* as specified above.

**Disability assistance expenses.** Reasonable expenses that are anticipated, during the period for which annual income is computed, for attendant care and auxiliary apparatus for a disabled family member, and that are necessary to enable a family member (including the disabled member) to be employed, provided that the expenses are neither paid to a member of the family nor reimbursed by an outside source.

**Disabled family.** A family whose head, cohead, spouse, or sole member is a person with disabilities; two or more persons with disabilities living together; or one or more persons with disabilities living with one or more live-in aides.

**Disabled person.** See *person with disabilities*.

**Disallowance.** Exclusion from annual income.

**Displaced family.** A family in which each member, or whose sole member, is a person displaced by governmental action, or a person whose dwelling has been extensively damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster declared or otherwise formally recognized pursuant to federal disaster relief laws.

**Domestic violence.** 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.

**Domicile.** The legal residence of the household head or spouse as determined in accordance with state and local law.

**Drug-related criminal activity.** 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.

**Economic self-sufficiency program.** Any program designed to encourage, assist, train or facilitate the economic independence of assisted families, or to provide work for such families. Can include job training, employment counseling, work placement, basic skills training, education, English proficiency, Workfare, financial or household management, apprenticeship, or any other program necessary to ready a participant to work (such as treatment for drug abuse or mental health treatment). Includes any work activities as defined in the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 607(d)). Also see 24 CFR 5.603(c).

**Elderly family.** A family whose head, cohead, spouse, or sole member is a person who is at least 62 years of age; two or more persons who are at least 62 years of age living together; or one or more persons who are at least 62 years of age living with one or more live-in aides.

**Elderly person.** An individual who is at least 62 years of age.

**Eligible family** A family that is income eligible and meets the other requirements of the 1937 Act and Part 5 of 24 CFR. See also *family*.

**Employer identification number (EIN).** The nine-digit taxpayer identifying number that is assigned to an individual, trust, estate, partnership, association, company, or corporation.

**Evidence of citizenship or eligible status.** The documents which must be submitted as evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status. See 24 CFR 5.508(b).

**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 and larger families. HUD may establish income ceilings higher or lower than 30 percent of median income if HUD finds such variations are necessary due to unusually high or low family incomes. See 24 CFR 5.603.

**Facility.** All or any portion of buildings, structures, equipment, roads, walks, parking lots, rolling stock, or other real or personal property or interest in the property.

**Fair Housing Act.** Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended by the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988.

**Fair market rent (FMR).** The rent, including the cost of utilities (except telephone), as established by HUD for units of varying sizes (by number of bedrooms), that must be paid in the housing market area to rent privately owned, existing, decent, safe, and sanitary rental housing of modest (non-luxury) nature with suitable amenities. See periodic publications in the *Federal Register* in accordance with 24 CFR Part 888.

**Family.** Includes but is not limited to the following, regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status, and can be further defined in HRA policy.

- A family with or without children (the temporary absence of a child from the home due to placement in foster care is not considered in determining family composition and family size)
- An elderly family or a near-elderly family
- A displaced family
- The remaining member of a tenant family
- A single person who is not an elderly or displaced person, or a person with disabilities, or the remaining member of a tenant family.

**Family rent to owner.** In the voucher program, the portion of rent to owner paid by the family.

**Family self-sufficiency program (FSS program).** The program established by an HRA in accordance with 24 CFR part 984 to promote self-sufficiency of assisted families, including the coordination of supportive services (42 U.S.C. 1437u).

**Family share.** The portion of rent and utilities paid by the family. For calculation of family share, see 24 CFR 982.515(a).

**Family unit size.** The appropriate number of bedrooms for a family, as determined by the HRA under the HRA subsidy standards.

**Federal agency.** A department of the executive branch of the federal government.

**Foster child care payment.** A payment to eligible households by state, local, or private agencies appointed by the state to administer payments for the care of foster children.

**Full-time student.** A person who is attending school or vocational training on a full-time basis (carrying a subject load that is considered full-time for day students under the standards and practices of the educational institution attended). See 24 CFR 5.603.

**Funding increment.** Each commitment of budget authority by HUD to an HRA under the consolidated annual contributions contract for the HRA program.

**Gender identity.** Actual or perceived gender-related characteristics.

**Gross rent.** The sum of the rent to owner plus any utility allowance.

**Group home.** A dwelling unit that is licensed by a state as a group home for the exclusive residential use of two to twelve persons who are elderly or persons with disabilities (including any live-in aide). (A special housing type: see 24 CFR 982.610–614.)

**Handicap.** Any condition or characteristic that renders a person an individual with handicaps. (See *person with disabilities*.)

**HAP contract.** The housing assistance payments contract. A written contract between the HRA and an owner for the purpose of providing housing assistance payments to the owner on behalf of an eligible family.

**Head of household.** The adult member of the family who is the head of the household for purposes of determining income eligibility and rent.

**Household.** A household includes additional people other than the family who, with the HRA's permission, live in an assisted unit, such as live-in aides, foster children, and foster adults.

**Housing assistance payment.** The monthly assistance payment by an HRA, which includes: (1) A payment to the owner for rent to the owner under the family's lease; and (2) An additional payment to the family if the total assistance payment exceeds the rent to owner.

**Housing agency (HA).** See *public housing agency*.

**Housing quality standards (HQS).** The HUD minimum quality standards for housing assisted under the voucher program.

**HUD.** The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Imputed asset.** An asset disposed of for less than fair market value during the two years preceding examination or reexamination.

**Imputed asset income.** The HRA-established passbook rate multiplied by the total cash value of assets. The calculation is used when net family assets exceed \$5,000.

**Imputed welfare income.** An amount of annual income that is not actually received by a family as a result of a specified welfare benefit reduction, but is included in the family's annual income and therefore reflected in the family's rental contribution.

**Income.** Income from all sources of each member of the household, as determined in accordance with criteria established by HUD.

**Income for eligibility.** Annual income.

**Income information** means information relating to an individual's income, including:

- All employment income information known to current or previous employers or other income sources
- All information about wages, as defined in the state's unemployment compensation law, including any social security number; name of the employee; quarterly wages of the employee; and the name, full address, telephone number, and, when known, employer identification number of an employer reporting wages under a state unemployment compensation law
- Whether an individual is receiving, has received, or has applied for unemployment compensation, and the amount and the period received
- Unearned IRS income and self-employment, wages, and retirement income
- Wage, social security, and supplemental security income data obtained from the Social Security Administration.

**Individual with handicaps.** See *person with disabilities*.

**Initial HRA.** In portability, the term refers to both: (1) An HRA that originally selected a family that later decides to move out of the jurisdiction of the selecting HRA; and (2) An HRA that absorbed a family that later decides to move out of the jurisdiction of the absorbing HRA.

**Initial payment standard.** The payment standard at the beginning of the HAP contract term.

**Initial rent to owner.** The rent to owner at the beginning of the HAP contract term.

***Institution of higher education.*** An institution of higher education as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1001 and 1002. See Exhibit 3-2 in this Administrative Plan.

***Jurisdiction.*** The area in which the HRA has authority under state and local law to administer the program.

***Landlord.*** Either the owner of the property or his/her representative, or the managing agent or his/her representative, as shall be designated by the owner.

***Lease.*** A written agreement between an owner and a tenant for the leasing of a dwelling unit to the tenant. The lease establishes the conditions for occupancy of the dwelling unit by a family with housing assistance payments under a HAP contract between the owner and the HRA.

***Live-in aide.*** A person who resides with one or more elderly persons, or near-elderly persons, or persons with disabilities, and who:

- Is determined to be essential to the care and well-being of the persons;
- Is not obligated for the support of the persons; and
- Would not be living in the unit except to provide the necessary supportive services.

***Living/sleeping room.*** A living room may be used as sleeping (bedroom) space, but no more than two persons may occupy the space. A bedroom or living/sleeping room must have at least one window and two electrical outlets in proper operating condition. See HCV GB p. 10-6 and 24 CFR 982.401.

***Local preference.*** A preference used by the HRA to select among applicant families.

***Low-income family.*** A family whose income does not exceed 80 percent of the median income for the area as determined by HUD with adjustments for smaller or larger families, except that HUD may establish income limits higher or lower than 80 percent for areas with unusually high or low incomes.

***Manufactured home.*** A manufactured structure that is built on a permanent chassis, is designed for use as a principal place of residence, and meets the HQS. (A special housing type: see 24 CFR 982.620 and 982.621.)

***Manufactured home space.*** In manufactured home space rental: A space leased by an owner to a family. A manufactured home owned and occupied by the family is located on the space. See 24 CFR 982.622 to 982.624.

***Medical expenses.*** 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 (a deduction for elderly or disabled families only). These allowances are given when calculating adjusted income for medical expenses in excess of 3 percent of annual income.

***Minor.*** A member of the family household other than the family head or spouse, who is under 18 years of age.

***Mixed family.*** A family whose members include those with citizenship or eligible immigration status, and those without citizenship or eligible immigration status.

**Monthly adjusted income.** One twelfth of adjusted income.

**Monthly income.** One twelfth of annual income.

**Mutual housing.** Included in the definition of *cooperative*.

**National.** A person who owes permanent allegiance to the United States, for example, as a result of birth in a United States territory or possession.

**Near-elderly family.** A family whose head, spouse, or sole member is a person who is at least 50 years of age but below the age of 62; or two or more persons, who are at least 50 years of age but below the age of 62, living together; or one or more persons who are at least 50 years of age but below the age of 62 living with one or more live-in aides.

**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.

- 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 §5.609.
- In determining net family assets, HRAs 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 therefore. 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.

**Noncitizen.** A person who is neither a citizen nor national of the United States.

**Notice of funding availability (NOFA).** For budget authority that HUD distributes by competitive process, the *Federal Register* document that invites applications for funding. This document explains how to apply for assistance and the criteria for awarding the funding.

**Office of General Counsel (OGC).** The General Counsel of HUD.

**Overcrowded.** A unit that does not meet the following HQS space standards: (1) Provide adequate space and security for the family; and (2) Have at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two persons.

**Owner.** Any person or entity with the legal right to lease or sublease a unit to a participant.

**HRA Plan.** The annual plan and the 5-year plan as adopted by the HRA and approved by HUD.

***HRA's quality control sample.*** An annual sample of files or records drawn in an unbiased manner and reviewed by an HRA supervisor (or by another qualified person other than the person who performed the original work) to determine if the work documented in the files or records conforms to program requirements. For minimum sample size see CFR 985.3.

***Participant (participant family).*** A family that has been admitted to the HRA program and is currently assisted in the program. The family becomes a participant on the effective date of the first HAP contract executed by the HRA for the family (first day of initial lease term).

***Payment standard.*** The maximum monthly assistance payment for a family assisted in the voucher program (before deducting the total tenant payment by the family).

***Person with disabilities.*** *For the purposes of program eligibility.* A person who has a disability as defined under the Social Security Act or Developmental Disabilities Care Act, or a person who has a physical or mental impairment expected to be of long and indefinite duration and whose ability to live independently is substantially impeded by that impairment but could be improved by more suitable housing conditions. This includes persons with AIDS or conditions arising from AIDS but excludes persons whose disability is based solely on drug or alcohol dependence. *For the purposes of reasonable accommodation.* A person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person regarded as having such an impairment, or a person with a record of such an impairment.

***Portability.*** Renting a dwelling unit with a Section 8 housing choice voucher outside the jurisdiction of the initial HRA.

***Premises.*** The building or complex in which the dwelling unit is located, including common areas and grounds.

***Previously unemployed.*** With regard to the earned income disallowance, a person with disabilities who has earned, in the 12 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.

***Private space.*** In shared housing, the portion of a contract unit that is for the exclusive use of an assisted family.

***Processing entity.*** The person or entity that, under any of the programs covered, is responsible for making eligibility and related determinations and any income reexamination. In the HCV program, the "processing entity" is the "responsible entity."

***Project owner.*** The person or entity that owns the housing project containing the assisted dwelling unit.

***Public assistance.*** Welfare or other payments to families or individuals, based on need, which are made under programs funded, separately or jointly, by federal, state, or local governments.

***Public housing agency (PHA).*** Any state, county, municipality, or other governmental entity or public body, or agency or instrumentality of these entities, that is authorized to engage or assist in the development or operation of low-income housing under the 1937 Act.

**Qualified family** (under the earned income disallowance). A family participating in an applicable assisted housing program or receiving HCV assistance:

- Whose annual income increases as a result of employment of a family member who is a person with disabilities and who was previously unemployed for one or more years prior to employment;
- Whose annual income increases as a result of increased earnings by a family member who is a person with disabilities during participation in any economic self-sufficiency or other job training program; or
- Whose annual income increases, as a result of new employment or increased earnings of a family member who is a person with disabilities, 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 responsible entity 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.

**Qualified census tract.** With regard to certain tax credit units, any census tract (or equivalent geographic area defined by the Bureau of the Census) in which at least 50 percent of households have an income of less than 60 percent of Area Median Gross Income (AMGI), or where the poverty rate is at least 25 percent, and where the census tract is designated as a qualified census tract by HUD.

**Reasonable rent.** A rent to owner that is not more than rent charged: (1) For comparable units in the private unassisted market; and (2) For comparable unassisted units in the premises.

**Reasonable accommodation.** A change, exception, or adjustment to a rule, policy, practice, or service to allow a person with disabilities to fully access the HRA's programs or services.

**Receiving HRA.** In portability: An HRA that receives a family selected for participation in the tenant-based program of another HRA. The receiving HRA issues a voucher and provides program assistance to the family.

**Recertification.** Sometimes called *reexamination*. The process of securing documentation of total family income used to determine the rent the tenant will pay for the next 12 months if there are no additional changes to be reported.

**Remaining member of the tenant family.** The person left in assisted housing who may or may not normally qualify for assistance on their own circumstances (i.e., an elderly spouse dies, leaving widow age 47 who is not disabled).

**Rent to owner.** The total monthly rent payable to the owner under the lease for the unit (also known as contract rent). Rent to owner covers payment for any housing services, maintenance, and utilities that the owner is required to provide and pay for.

**Residency preference.** An HRA preference for admission of families that reside anywhere in a specified area, including families with a member who works or has been hired to work in the area (See *residency preference area*).

**Residency preference area.** The specified area where families must reside to qualify for a residency preference.

**Responsible entity.** For the public housing and the Section 8 tenant-based assistance, project-based voucher assistance, and moderate rehabilitation programs, the responsible entity means the HRA administering the program under an ACC with HUD. For all other Section 8 programs, the responsible entity means the Section 8 owner.

**Secretary.** The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

**Section 8.** Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937.

**Section 8 covered programs.** All HUD programs which assist housing under Section 8 of the 1937 Act, including Section 8 assisted housing for which loans are made under Section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959.

**Section 214.** Section 214 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1980, as amended.

**Section 214 covered programs.** The collective term for the HUD programs to which the restrictions imposed by Section 214 apply. These programs are set forth in 24 CFR 5.500.

**Security deposit.** A dollar amount (maximum set according to the regulations) which can be used for unpaid rent or damages to the owner upon termination of the lease.

**Set-up charges.** In a manufactured home space rental, charges payable by the family for assembling, skirting, and anchoring the manufactured home.

**Sexual assault.** Any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by federal, tribal, or state law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent (42 U.S.C. 13925(a)).

**Sexual orientation.** Homosexuality, heterosexuality or bisexuality.

**Shared housing.** A unit occupied by two or more families. The unit consists of both common space for shared use by the occupants of the unit and separate private space for each assisted family. (A special housing type: see 24 CFR 982.615–982.618.)

**Single person.** A person living alone or intending to live alone.

**Single room occupancy housing (SRO).** A unit that contains no sanitary facilities or food preparation facilities, or contains either, but not both, types of facilities. (A special housing type: see 24 CFR 982.602–982.605.)

**Social security number (SSN).** The nine-digit number that is assigned to a person by the Social Security Administration and that identifies the record of the person's earnings reported to the Social Security Administration. The term does not include a number with a letter as a suffix that is used to identify an auxiliary beneficiary.

**Special admission.** Admission of an applicant that is not on the HRA waiting list or without considering the applicant's waiting list position.

**Special housing types.** See subpart M of part 982. Subpart M states the special regulatory requirements for: SRO housing, congregate housing, group homes, shared housing, cooperatives (including mutual housing), and manufactured homes (including manufactured home space rental).



***Specified welfare benefit reduction.*** Those reductions of welfare benefits (for a covered family) that may not result in a reduction of the family rental contribution. A reduction of welfare benefits because of fraud in connection with the welfare program, or because of welfare sanction due to noncompliance with a welfare agency requirement to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program.

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

***Stalking.*** To follow, pursue, or repeatedly commit acts with the intent to kill, injure, harass, or intimidate; or to place under surveillance with the intent to kill, injure, harass, or intimidate another person; and 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 (1) that person, (2) a member of the immediate family of that person, or (3) the spouse or intimate partner of that person.

***State wage information collection agency (SWICA).*** The state agency, including any Indian tribal agency, receiving quarterly wage reports from employers in the state, or an alternative system that has been determined by the Secretary of Labor to be as effective and timely in providing employment-related income and eligibility information.

***Subsidy standards.*** Standards established by an HRA to determine the appropriate number of bedrooms and amount of subsidy for families of different sizes and compositions.

***Suspension.*** The term on the family's voucher stops from the date the family submits a request for HRA approval of the tenancy, until the date the HRA notifies the family in writing whether the request has been approved or denied. This practice is also called *tolling*.

***Tax credit rent.*** With regard to certain tax credit units, the rent charged for comparable units of the same bedroom size in the building that also receive the low-income housing tax credit but do not have any additional rental assistance (e.g., tenant-based voucher assistance).

***Tenancy addendum.*** For the housing choice voucher program, the lease language required by HUD in the lease between the tenant and the owner.

***Tenant.*** The person or persons (other than a live-in aide) who executes the lease as lessee of the dwelling unit.

***Tenant rent to owner.*** See *family rent to owner*.

***Term of lease.*** The amount of time a tenant agrees in writing to live in a dwelling unit.

***Total tenant payment (TTP).*** The total amount the HUD rent formula requires the tenant to pay toward rent and utilities.

***Unit.*** Residential space for the private use of a family. The size of a unit is based on the number of bedrooms contained within the unit and generally ranges from zero (0) bedrooms to six (6) bedrooms.

***Utilities.*** Water, electricity, gas, other heating, refrigeration, cooking fuels, trash collection, and sewage services. Telephone service is not included.

**Utility allowance.** If the cost of utilities (except telephone) and other housing services for an assisted unit is not included in the tenant rent but is the responsibility of the family occupying the unit, an amount equal to the estimate made or approved by an HRA or HUD of the monthly cost of a reasonable consumption of such utilities and other services for the unit by an energy-conservative household of modest circumstances consistent with the requirements of a safe, sanitary, and healthful living environment.

**Utility reimbursement.** In the voucher program, the portion of the housing assistance payment which exceeds the amount of rent to owner.

**Utility hook-up charge.** In a manufactured home space rental: Costs payable by a family for connecting the manufactured home to utilities such as water, gas, electrical and sewer lines.

**Very low-income family.** A low-income family whose annual income does not exceed 50 percent of the median income for the area, as determined by HUD, with adjustments for smaller and larger families. HUD may establish income limits higher or lower than 50 percent of the median income for the area on the basis of its finding that such variations are necessary because of unusually high or low family incomes. This is the income limit for the housing choice voucher program.

**Veteran.** A person who has served in the active military or naval service of the United States at any time and who shall have been discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.

**Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2013.** Prohibits denying admission to the program to an otherwise qualified applicant or terminating assistance on the basis that the applicant or program participant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

**Violent criminal activity.** Any illegal criminal activity that has as one of its elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another.

**Voucher (housing choice voucher).** A document issued by an HRA to a family selected for admission to the housing choice voucher program. This document describes the program and the procedures for HRA approval of a unit selected by the family. The voucher also states obligations of the family under the program.

**Voucher holder.** A family holding a voucher with an unexpired term (search time).

**Voucher program.** The housing choice voucher program.

**Waiting list.** A list of families organized according to HUD regulations and HRA policy who are waiting for a unit to become available.

**Waiting list admission.** An admission from the HRA waiting list.

**Welfare assistance.** Income assistance from federal or state welfare programs, including assistance provided under TANF and general assistance. Does not include assistance directed solely to meeting housing expenses, nor programs that provide health care, child care or other services for working families. For the FSS program (984.103(b)), *welfare assistance* includes only cash maintenance payments from federal or state programs designed to meet a family's ongoing basic needs, but does not include food stamps, emergency rental and utilities assistance, SSI, SSDI, or social security.