STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN

FOR THE
SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAMS

Effective 7/1/12

Chapter 1

STATEMENT OF POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

A. DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT/OVERVIEW 1-1
B. LOCAL GOALS 1-2
C. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN 1-3
D. ADMINISTRATIVE FEE RESERVE 1-3
E. RULES AND REGULATIONS 1-3
F. TERMINOLOGY 1-4
G. FAIR HOUSING POLICY 1-5
H. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY 1-6
I. TRANSLATIONS OF DOCUMENTS 1-7
J. MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES 1-8
K. RECORDS FOR MONITORING PHA PERFORMANCE 1-9
L. PRIVACY RIGHTS 1-10
M. FAMILY OUTREACH 1-10
N. OWNER OUTREACH 1-11
O. DISCRETION TO OPERATE PBV PROGRAM 1-12

Chapter 2

ELIGIBILITY FOR ADMISSION

A. ELIGIBILITY FACTORS 2-1
B. FAMILY COMPOSITION 2-2
C. INCOME LIMITATIONS 2-4
D. MANDATORY SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS 2-5
E. CITIZENSHIP/ELIGIBLE IMMIGRATION STATUS 2-5
F. OTHER CRITERIA FOR ADMISSIONS 2-6
G. TENANT SCREENING 2-6
H. CHANGES IN ELIGIBILITY PRIOR TO EFFECTIVE DATE OF CONTRACT 2-7
I. INELIGIBLE FAMILIES 2-7
J. PROHIBITED ADMISSIONS CRITERIA 2-7

Chapter 3

APPLYING FOR ADMISSION

A. OVERVIEW OF APPLICATION-TAKING PROCESS 3-4
B. OPENING/CLOSING OF APPLICATION-TAKING 3-5
C. "INITIAL" APPLICATION PROCEDURES 3-6
D. APPLICANT STATUS WHILE ON WAITING LIST 3-7
E. APPLICANT STATUS WHILE ON PROJECT-BASED PROG. WAITING LIST..... 3-8
F. TIME OF SELECTION 3-8
G. COMPLETION OF A FULL APPLICATION 3-9
H. VERIFICATION 3-9
I. FINAL DETERMINATION AND NOTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY 3-9

Chapter 4

MAINTAINING THE WAITING LIST

A. WAITING LIST 4-1
B. WAITING LIST PREFERENCES 4-2
C. DENIAL OF PREFERENCE 4-4
D. CHANGES IN PREFERENCE STATUS 4-4
E. EXCEPTIONS FOR SPECIAL ADMISSIONS 4-4
F. FUNDING FOR SPECIFIED CATEGORY OF WAITING LIST FAMILIES 4-5
G. INCOME TARGETING 4-8
H. INCOME TARGETING ELIGIBILITY 4-9
I. REMOVAL FROM WAITING LIST AND PURGING THE WAITING LIST 4-9

Chapter 5

SUBSIDY STANDARDS

A. DETERMINING FAMILY UNIT SIZE (VOUCHER SIZE) 5-1
B. EXCEPTIONS TO SUBSIDY STANDARDS 5-2
C. UNIT SIZE SELECTED 5-4

Chapter 6

FACTORS RELATED TO TOTAL TENANT PAYMENT DETERMINATION

A. INCOME AND ALLOWANCES 6-1
B. DISALLOWANCE OF EARNED INCOME FROM RENT DETERMINATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES 6-2
C. MINIMUM RENT 6-5
D. DEFINITION OF TEMPORARILY/PERMANENTLY ABSENT 6-7
E. AVERAGING INCOME 6-11
F. MINIMUM INCOME 6-11
G. INCOME OF PERSON PERMANENTLY CONFINED TO NURSING HOME 6-12
H. REGULAR CONTRIBUTIONS AND GIFTS 6-12
I. ALIMONY AND CHILD SUPPORT 6-12
J. LUMP-SUM RECEIPTS 6-13
K. CONTRIBUTIONS TO RETIREMENT FUNDS AS ASSETS 6-14
L. ASSETS DISPOSED OF FOR LESS THAN FAIR MARKET VALUE 6-14
M. CHILD CARE EXPENSES 6-14
N. MEDICAL EXPENSES 6-15
O. PRORATION OF ASSISTANCE FOR "MIXED" FAMILIES 6-15
P. INCOME CHANGE RESULTING FROM WELFARE PROG. REQUIREMENTS 6-15
Q. UTILITY ALLOWANCE AND UTILITY REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENTS 6-17

Chapter 7

VERIFICATION PROCEDURES

A. METHODS OF VERIFICATION AND TIME ALLOWED 7-2
B. RELEASE OF INFORMATION 7-4
C. COMPUTER MATCHING 7-4
D. ITEMS TO BE VERIFIED 7-6
E. VERIFICATION OF INCOME 7-7
F. INCOME FROM ASSETS 7-11
G. VERIFICATION OF ASSETS 7-12
H. VERIFICATION OF ALLOWABLE DEDUCTIONS FROM INCOME 7-13
I. VERIFYING NON-FINANCIAL FACTORS 7-15

Chapter 8

VOUCHER ISSUANCE AND BRIEFINGS

A. ISSUANCE OF VOUCHERS 8-1
B. BRIEFING TYPES AND REQUIRED ATTENDANCE 8-2
C. ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION IN AREAS WITHOUT LOW INCOME OR MINORITY CONCENTRATION 8-5
D. ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES WHO CLAIM DISCRIMINATION 8-6
E. SECURITY DEPOSIT REQUIREMENTS 8-6
F. TERM OF VOUCHER 8-6
G. VOUCHER ISSUANCE DETERMINATION FOR SPLIT HOUSEHOLDS. 8-8
H. REMAINING MEMBER OF TENANT FAMILY - RETENTION OF VOUCHER 8-8

Chapter 9

REQUEST FOR TENANCY APPROVAL AND CONTRACT EXECUTION

A. REQUEST FOR TENANCY APPROVAL 9-1
B. ELIGIBLE TYPES OF HOUSING 9-2
C. LEASE REVIEW 9-3
D. SEPARATE AGREEMENTS 9-4
E. INITIAL INSPECTIONS 9-5
F. RENT LIMITATIONS 9-5
G. DISAPPROVAL OF PROPOSED RENT 9-5
H. INFORMATION TO OWNERS 9-6
I. OWNER DISAPPROVAL 9-6
J. CHANGE IN TOTAL TENANT PAYMENT (TTP) PRIOR TO HAP EFFECTIVE DATE 9-6
K. CONTRACT EXECUTION PROCESS 9-7
L. PROOF OF OWNERSHIP 9-7
M. CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP 9-7

Chapter 10

HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS AND INSPECTIONS

A. GUIDELINES/TYPES OF INSPECTIONS 10-1
B. INITIAL HQS INSPECTION 10-2
C. ANNUAL HQS INSPECTIONS 10-3
D. SPECIAL/COMPLAINT INSPECTIONS 10-4
E. QUALITY CONTROL INSPECTIONS 10-4
F. ACCEPTABILITY CRITERIA AND EXCEPTIONS TO HQS 10-4
G. EMERGENCY REPAIR ITEMS 10-5
H. CONSEQUENCES IF OWNER IS RESPONSIBLE (NON-EMERGENCY ITEMS) 10-6
I. DETERMINATION OF RESPONSIBILITY 10-7
J. CONSEQUENCES IF FAMILY IS RESPONSIBLE 10-8

Chapter 11

OWNER RENTS, RENT REASONABLENESS, AND PAYMENT STANDARDS

A. RENT TO OWNER IN THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM 11-1
B. MAKING PAYMENTS TO OWNERS 11-2
C. RENT REASONABLENESS DETERMINATIONS 11-2
D. PAYMENT STANDARDS FOR THE VOUCHER PROGRAM 11-4
E. ADJUSTMENTS TO PAYMENT STANDARDS 11-4
F. EXCEPTION PAYMENT STANDARDS 11-6
G. OWNER PAYMENT IN HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM 11-6

Chapter 12

RE-EXAMINATIONS

A. ANNUAL ACTIVITIES 12-1
B. ANNUAL RE-EXAMINATION 12-1
C. REPORTING INTERIM CHANGES 12-4
D. OTHER INTERIM REPORTING ISSUES 12-5
E. INCOME CHANGES RESULTING FROM WELFARE PROG REQUIREMENTS . 12-6
F. NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS OF RE-EXAMINATIONS 12-7
G. TIMELY REPORTING OF CHANGES IN INCOME (AND ASSETS) 12-8
H. CHANGES IN VOUCHER SIZE AS A RESULT OF FAMILY COMPOSITION CHANGES 12-9
I. CONTINUANCE OF ASSISTANCE FOR "MIXED" FAMILIES 12-9
J. MISREPRESENTATION OF FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES 12-9

Chapter 13

MOVES WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE/PORTABILITY

A. ALLOWABLE MOVES 13-1
B. RESTRICTIONS ON MOVES 13-2
C. PROCEDURE FOR MOVES 13-2
D. PORTABILITY 13-3
E. OUTGOING PORTABILITY 13-3
F. INCOMING PORTABILITY 13-4

Chapter 14

CONTRACT TERMINATIONS

A. CONTRACT TERMINATION 14-1
B. TERMINATION BY THE FAMILY: MOVES 14-1
C. TERMINATION OF TENANCY BY THE OWNER: EVICTIONS 14-1
D. TERMINATION OF THE CONTRACT BY PHA 14-3

Chapter 15

DENIAL OR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE

A. GROUNDS FOR DENIAL/TERMINATION 15-1
B. SCREENING & TERMINATIONS FOR DRUG ABUSE & OTHER CRIMINAL ACTIVITY 15-4
C. FAMILY OBLIGATIONS 15-8
D. PROCEDURES FOR NON-CITIZENS 15-12
E. $0 ASSISTANCE TENANTS 15-13
F. MISSED APPOINTMENTS AND DEADLINES 15-13

Chapter 16

OWNER DISAPPROVAL AND RESTRICTION

A. DISAPPROVAL OF OWNER 16-1
B. OWNER RESTRICTIONS AND PENALTIES 16-2
C. CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP 16-2

Chapter 17

CLAIMS, MOVE-OUT AND CLOSE-OUT INSPECTIONS

Chapter 18

OWNER OR FAMILY DEBTS TO THE PHA

A. REPAYMENT AGREEMENT FOR FAMILIES 18-1
B. DEBTS OWED DUE TO FAMILY ERROR 18-2
C. DEBTS DUE TO PROGRAM FRAUD AND ABUSE 18-2
D. DEBTS DUE TO MINIMUM RENT TEMPORARY HARDSHIP 18-2
E. GUIDELINES FOR REPAYMENT AGREEMENTS 18-3
F. OWNER DEBTS TO THE PHA 18-4
G. WRITING OFF DEBTS 18-4

Chapter 19

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

A. COMPLAINTS TO THE PHA 19-1
B. INFORMAL REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR APPLICANTS 19-2
C. INFORMAL HEARING PROCEDURES 19-3
D. HEARING AND APPEAL PROVISIONS FOR "RESTRICTIONS ON ASSISTANCE TO NON-CITIZENS" 19-8
E. MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES FOR APPLICANTS/PARTICIPANTS WITH DISABILITIES 19-10

Chapter 20

SPECIAL HOUSING TYPES

A. MANUFACTURED HOMES 20-1
B. SPECIAL HOUSING TYPES AS REASONABLE ACCOMODATION..... 20-3

GLOSSARY

A. ACRONYMS USED IN SUBSIDIZED HOUSING GL-1
B. GLOSSARY OF TERMS IN SUBSIDIZED HOUSING GL-3
C. GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THE NON-CITIZENS RULE GL-15

PROGRAM INTEGRITY ADDENDUM

A. CRITERIA FOR INVESTIGATION OF SUSPECTED ABUSE AND FRAUD PI-2
B. STEPS THE PHA WILL TAKE TO PREVENT PROGRAM ABUSE AND FRAUD PI-2
C. STEPS THE PHA WILL TAKE TO DETECT PROGRAM ABUSE AND FRAUD PI-3
D. THE PHA'S HANDLING OF ALLEGATIONS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE AND FRAUD PI-4
E. OVERPAYMENTS TO OWNERS PI-4
F. HOW THE PHA WILL INVESTIGATE ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

AND FRAUD PI-5
G. PLACEMENT OF DOCUMENTS, EVIDENCE AND STATEMENTS OBTAINED BY THE PHA PI-6
H. CONCLUSION OF THE PHA'S INVESTIGATIVE REVIEW PI-6
I. EVALUATION OF THE FINDINGS PI-6
J. ACTION PROCEDURES FOR VIOLATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN DOCUMENTED PI-7

MEDICAL AND DENTAL ADDENDUM:
IRS PUBLICATION #502

Chapter 1

STATEMENT OF POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

The Section 8 program (now known as the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program) was enacted as part of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, which re-codified the U.S. Housing Act of 1937. The Housing and Community Development Act has been amended from time to time, and its requirements, as they apply to the Section 8 tenant-based assistance program, are described in and implemented through this administrative plan.

Administration of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program described herein is the responsibility of the State of Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) and its contract administrator, jointly hereafter referred to as the public housing agency (PHA). Administration of the DSS Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program shall be in compliance with the Section 8 housing choice voucher regulations of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as well as with all federal, state and local fair housing laws and regulations. The Department of Social Services Housing Unit and its subcontractors shall be in compliance with the State Code of Ethics as set forth in Conn General Statutes Title 1 Chapter 10 1-79 through 1-101 inclusive.

Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction covers the entire state of Connecticut.

A. DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT/OVERVIEW

The State of Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) is a statewide public service agency which provides a broad range of services to the elderly, disabled, families and individuals who need assistance in maintaining or achieving their full potential for self-direction, self-reliance and independent living. It administers over 90 legislatively authorized programs and approximately one-third of the state budget. By statute, it is the state agency responsible for administering a number of programs under federal legislation, including the Rehabilitation Act, the Food Stamp Act, the Older Americans Act and the Social Security Act. The department is also designated as a public housing agency for the purposes of administering the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program under the federal Housing Act, and its mission is to provide safe, decent, affordable housing for eligible Connecticut residents.

The department is headed by the Commissioner of Social Services and a Deputy Commissioner. There is a regional administrator responsible for each of the three service regions. Within central office there are 19 organizational units headed by directors or other managers reporting to the two commissioners. By statute, there is a statewide advisory council. The department has

approximately 1,950 employees and had expenditures totaling over $5 billion in the state fiscal year 2010-2011.

The department administers most of its programs through offices located throughout the state. Traditionally, towns and cities have administered the general assistance (GA) program under regulations, direction and funding from the department. On July 1, 1998, the department assumed the administration of the GA program in all cities and towns except Norwich. For other department programs, services are available through twelve (12) offices located in the three (3) regions, with central office support located in Hartford. In addition, many services funded by the department are available through community-based agencies, including the 156 senior centers throughout Connecticut. The department has out-stationed employees at hospitals to expedite Medicaid applications. The department funds Healthy Start sites which can accept applications for Medicaid for pregnant women and young children. Many of the services provided by the department are available via mail or telephone. The department also contracts with private providers to operate some of its programs.

Within the department, the Housing Services Unit has been authorized to administer the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. In addition to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, the unit maintains oversight of the Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Program and the state-funded Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

B. LOCAL GOALS [24 CFR 982.1]

The Section 8 Program is designed to achieve these major objectives:

1. To provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing for very low income families while maintaining their rent payments at an affordable level.

2. To ensure that all units meet housing quality standards and that families pay fair and reasonable rents.

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

4. To 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.

In addition, the PHA has the following goals for the program:

1. To assist the local economy by increasing the occupancy rate and the amount of money flowing into the community.

2. To encourage the self-sufficiency of participating families.

3. To create positive public awareness and expand the level of support among families, owners, and the community in accomplishing the PHA's mission.

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

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

C. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN [24 CFR 982.54]

The purpose of the administrative plan is to establish policies for carrying out the programs in a manner consistent with HUD requirements and local goals and objectives contained in the Agency Plan. The Housing Choice Voucher Program was implemented as of October 1, 1999. The PHA is responsible for complying with all changes in HUD regulations pertaining to these programs. If such changes conflict with this plan, HUD regulations will have precedence. The original plan and any changes must be approved by the DSS Deputy Commissioner, the pertinent sections included in the Agency Plan, and a copy provided to HUD.

Applicable regulations include:

24 CFR Part 5: General Program Requirements

24 CFR Part 8: Nondiscrimination Based on Handicap in Federally Assisted Programs

24 CFR Part 982: Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance

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

All expenditures from the administrative fee reserve will be approved by the Department of Social Services Deputy Commissioner of Administration and made in accordance with the approved budget.

E. RULES AND REGULATIONS [24 CFR 982.52]

This administrative plan is set forth to define the PHA's local policies for operation of the housing programs in the context of federal laws and regulations. All issues related to Section 8 not addressed in this document are governed by such federal regulations, HUD memos, notices and guidelines, or other applicable law. The policies in this administrative plan have been designed to ensure compliance with the consolidated annual contributions contract (ACC) and all HUD-approved applications for program funding.

F. TERMINOLOGY

The State of Connecticut Department of Social Services and its contract administrator are referred to as the "PHA" or "public housing agency" throughout this document.

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

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

"Landlord" and "owner" are used interchangeably.

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

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

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

"HQS" means the housing quality standards required by regulations and enhanced by the PHA.

"Failure to provide" refers to all requirements in the first Family Obligation. See Chapter 15, "Denial or Termination of Assistance."

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

See Glossary for other terminology.

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

It is the policy of the public housing agency to comply fully with all federal, state, and local nondiscrimination laws and with the rules and regulations governing fair housing and equal opportunity in housing and employment.

The PHA shall not deny any family or individual the equal opportunity to apply for or receive assistance under the Section 8 program on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national or ethnic origin, age, familial or marital status, handicap or disability or sexual orientation. The PHA will make every effort to provide training and materials to its staff to enable them to inform owners and tenants of State Statute 46a-11F (discrimination based on lawful sources of income) and 46a-7 (discrimination based on physical or mental disability).

To further its commitment to full compliance with applicable civil rights laws, the PHA will provide federal/state/local information to voucher holders regarding unlawful discrimination and any recourse available to families who believe they are victims of a discriminatory act. Such information will be made available during the family briefing session, and all applicable fair housing information and discrimination complaint forms will be made a part of the voucher holder's briefing packet and available upon request at the front desk.

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

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

The PHA's offices are accessible to persons with disabilities. Accessibility for the hearing impaired is provided by the TTD/TDY telephone service provider.

The PHA will attempt to remedy discrimination complaints made against the PHA.

The PHA will provide a copy of a discrimination complaint form to the complainant and provide the family with information on how to complete and submit the form to HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) including the provision of the toll free number for the Housing Discrimination Hotline: 1-800-669-9777 and Federal Relay Service at (800) 887-8339.

H. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY [24CFR 100.202]

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

A participant with a disability must first *ask* for a specific change to a policy or practice as an accommodation of their disability before the PHA will treat a person differently than anyone else. The PHA's policies and practices will be designed to provide assurances that persons with disabilities will be given reasonable accommodations, upon request, so that they may fully access and utilize the housing program and related services. The availability of requesting an accommodation will be made known at the initial tenant briefing and again at each annual re-examination. This policy is intended to afford persons with disabilities an equal opportunity to obtain the same result, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement as those who do not have disabilities and is applicable to all situations described in this administrative plan including when a family initiates contact with the PHA, when the PHA initiates contact with a family (including when a family applies), and when the PHA schedules or reschedules appointments of any kind.

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

> A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual;
>
> A record of such impairment; or
>
> Being regarded as having such an impairment

[Note: This is not the same as the HUD definition used for purposes of determining allowances.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Applying for Admission

All persons who wish to apply for any of the PHA's programs must submit a pre-application via **written** format, as indicated in our public notice. Applications will be made available in an accessible format upon request from a person with a disability.

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

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

I. TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS

The PHA has bilingual staff to assist non-English speaking families in Spanish and other languages spoken in the communities. Documents will be translated into Spanish and other languages as determined by the PHA.

In determining whether it is feasible to provide translation of documents written in English into

other languages, the PHA will consider the following factors:

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

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

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

J. MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

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

1. Selection from the Waiting List
2. Reasonable Rent
3. Determination of Adjusted Income
4. Utility Allowance Schedule
5. HQS Quality Control Inspections
6. HQS Enforcement
7. Expanding Housing Opportunities
8. Payment Standards
9. Annual Re-examinations
10. Correct Tenant Rent Calculations
11. Pre-Contract HQS Inspections
12. Annual HQS Inspections
13. Lease-up
14. Family Self-Sufficiency Enrollment and Escrow Account Balances
15. Bonus Indicator (De-concentration)

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

Selection from the waiting list

Rent reasonableness

Determination of adjusted income

HQS enforcement

HQS quality control

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

K. RECORDS FOR MONITORING PHA PERFORMANCE

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

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

Not less than 5% of reexaminations.

Not less than 5% of new applications.

Not less than 5% of claims processed.

Family File

To facilitate monitoring and program auditing the PHA will maintain a file for each family when the family is selected from the waiting list and keep the file active until the family is no longer a program participant. The inactive file should be kept for three years. The file should contain the following:

1. Application forms
2. Income verification forms
3. A copy of each voucher issued
4. Copies of relevant correspondence
5. All requests for lease approval
6. A copy of all approved leases

7. All rent reasonableness determinations
8. All unit inspection forms
9. A copy of each HAP contract executed by PHA and owner
10. Interim re-determination forms and related records
11. Notification of lease disapproval, if applicable
12. Records concerning denial of assistance, or termination of assistance
13. All PHA records and determinations concerning informal reviews or hearings
14. Welfare-to-Work participation agreement (for Welfare-to-Work participants only)
15. DCF referral (for Family Unification Participants only)
16. Social Security number verification
17. Noncitizen verification
18. Proof of legal identity for all family members

L. PRIVACY RIGHTS [24 CFR 5.212]

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

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

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

The PHA's practices and procedures are designed to safeguard the privacy of applicants and program participants. All applicant and participant files will be stored in a secure location which is only accessible by authorized staff.

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

All files must be signed for when removed from the secured file storage area.

M. FAMILY OUTREACH

The PHA will publicize and disseminate information to make known the availability of housing assistance and related services for very low income families on a regular basis. When the PHA's waiting list is open, the PHA will publicize the availability and nature of housing assistance for very low income families in newspapers of general circulation, minority media, the agency website and by other suitable means. Notices will also be provided in Spanish and other languages spoken in the communities.

To reach persons who cannot read the newspapers; the PHA will distribute fact sheets to the broadcasting media, and initiate personal contacts with members of the news media and community service personnel. The PHA will also utilize public service announcements.

The PHA will communicate the status of housing availability to other service providers in the community; advise them of housing eligibility factors and guidelines in order that they can make proper referrals for housing assistance.

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

The PHA encourages owners of decent, safe and sanitary housing units to lease to Section 8 families. The PHA maintains a list of interested landlords for the Section 8 program and updates this list at least annually. When listings from owners are received, they will be compiled by the PHA staff by bedroom size.

The PHA will maintain lists of available housing submitted by owners in all neighborhoods within the PHA's jurisdiction to ensure greater mobility and housing choice to very low income households. The lists of owners will be provided at the front desk and provided at briefings.

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

Printed material is offered to acquaint owners and managers with the opportunities available under the program.

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

O. DISCRETION TO OPERATE A PBV PROGRAM [24 CFR 983.5 (c), 983.6 (a), 983.51(b)(d)

The PHA will exercise its discretionary authority to operate a project-based component. The option to set-aside up to 20% of budget authority (983.6(a)) will permit the PHA to develop and maintain long-term safe, decent and affordable housing that is accessible to its Section 8 applicants and program participants. The PHA has not set a specific goal for the amount of its budget authority that it will dedicate to its PBV program; however, in any given calendar year, the PHA reserves the right to utilize up to 20% of its budget authority for its PBV program.

Selection of PBV Owner Proposals

The final rule establishes two methods that a PHA can use to select owner proposals. These methods are found at 983.51(b)(1) and (2). The PHA will utilize the following PBV proposal selection methods:

1. 983.51(b)(1) permits the PHA to publicly issue a competitive request for PBV proposals. The PHA will, at its discretion, make vouchers available in support of the Connecticut's Interagency Supportive Housing Initiative. RFPs will be issued by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) on behalf of the partnering agencies for capitol funds, service dollars and rent subsidies. Proposals will be reviewed and selected by representatives from participating agencies. CHFA will notify successful applicants and public announcement will be done by the partner agencies on their respective websites.

983.51(b)(2) permits the PHA to select proposals that have successfully competed for housing assistance under a federal, state, or local government housing assistance, community development, or supportive services program, provided 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.

At its option and on a case-by-case basis, the PHA may entertain requests to attach PBV assistance to units previously selected by a non-PBV competition, in accordance with the requirement of 983.51(b)(2)), under the following circumstances:

- Adequate PBV voucher and budget authority is projected to be available when the units are ready for occupancy;
- The request meets a compelling need and is otherwise consistent with the PHA's long-term affordable housing goals;
- The project is otherwise in compliance with all HUD and the PHA's PBV requirements.

The owner/project sponsor must initiate a written request for PBV assistance to the PHA accompanied by a letter from the "selection agency" that competitively selected the project for housing assistance under a federal, state or local government program. This letter, submitted on the "selection agency's" letterhead and signed by an authorized official, must include the following information:

1. Date of the proposal selection;

2. A certification that the proposal was competitively selected by the agency in full compliance with all publicly advertised selection requirements;
3. A statement that proposal selection did not involve any consideration that the project would receive PBV assistance.
4. A copy of the NOFA or other similar solicitation for affordable housing assistance that the owner/project sponsor responded to; and,
5. A description of the housing program for which the applicant successfully completed, noting any special deed restrictions and/or special considerations such as tenant selection preferences.

When the PHA receives the "selection agency" letter, it will request that the owner/project sponsor fill out a PHA PBV application, and subsequently determine if a reservation of PBV can and will be made.

Public notice of PHA PBV owner/project sponsor selection (983.51(d))
Once the PHA has received all required HUD approvals to proceed to AHAP or HAP and all other program requirements have been met, the PHA will publicly announce the selection of owner proposals on its website at http://www.ct.gov/dss/site/default.asp.

Chapter 2

ELIGIBILITY FOR ADMISSION

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

INTRODUCTION

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

A. ELIGIBILITY FACTORS [982.201(B)]

The PHA accepts applications only from families whose head or spouse is at least 18 years of age or is an emancipated minor under state law.

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

The HUD eligibility criteria are:

- An applicant must be a "family"
- An applicant must be within the appropriate income limits
  - An applicant must furnish Social Security numbers for all family members age six and older
  - An applicant must furnish evidence of citizenship or eligible immigrant status and verification where required
  - An applicant must furnish proof of legal identity

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

Reasons for denial of admission are addressed in Chapter 15 of this administrative plan, "Denial or Termination of Assistance." These reasons for denial constitute additional admission criteria.

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

Evidence of citizenship or eligible immigrant status will not be verified until the family is selected from the waiting list for final eligibility processing for issuance of a voucher, unless the PHA determines that such eligibility is in question, whether or not the family is at or near the top of the waiting list.

B. FAMILY COMPOSITION [24 CFR 982.201©]

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

A family includes a family with a child or children. A group of persons consisting of two or more elderly persons or disabled persons living together, or one or more elderly or disabled persons living with one or more live-in aides is a family. The PHA determines if any other group of persons qualifies as a family.

A single person family may be:

An elderly person.
A displaced person.
A person with a disability.
(Individuals may not be considered disabled for eligibility purposes solely on the basis of any drug or alcohol dependence.)

Any other single person.

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

A family also includes:

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

Head of Household

The head of household is the adult member of the household who is designated by the family as head, is wholly or partly responsible for paying the rent, and has the legal capacity to enter into a lease under state/local law. Emancipated minors who qualify under state law will be recognized as head of household.

Spouse or Head

Spouse means the husband or wife of the head.

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

Co-Head

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

Minors who are emancipated under state law may be designated as a co-head.

Live-in Attendants

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

- Is determined by the PHA to be essential to the care and well being of an elderly person, a near-elderly person (i.e., aged 50-61), or a person with disabilities,
- Is not obligated for the support of the person(s), and
- Would not be living in the unit except to provide care for the person(s).

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

1. Income of the live-in aide will not be counted for purposes of determining eligibility or level of benefits.
2. Live-in aides are not subject to non-citizen rule requirements.
3. Live-in aides will not be considered as a remaining member of the tenant family.

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

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

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

Verification must include the hours during which the care will be provided.
[24 CFR 982.316] At any time, the PHA may refuse to approve a particular person as a live-in aide or may withdraw such approval if:

(1) The person commits fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program;
(2) The person commits drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity; or
(3) The person currently owes rent or other amounts to the PHA or to another PHA in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act.

Split Households Prior to Voucher Issuance

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

1. Which family member applied as head of household.
2. Which family unit retains the children or any disabled or elderly members.
3. Restrictions that were in place at the time the family applied.

4. Role of domestic violence or criminal activity in the split.
5. Recommendations of social service agencies or qualified professionals such as children's protective services.

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

Multiple Families in the Same Household

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

Joint Custody of Children

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

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

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

In order to be eligible for assistance, an applicant must:

have an annual income at the time of admission that does not exceed the very low income limits for occupancy established by HUD.

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

- A very low-income family.
- A low-income family that is continuously assisted under the 1937 Housing Act. An
- applicant is continuously assisted if the family has received assistance under any 1937
- Housing Act program within 120 days of voucher issuance. Programs include public housing, all Section 8 programs, and all Section 23 programs.
- A low-income family physically displaced by rental rehabilitation activity under 24 CFR part 511.
- A low-income non-purchasing family residing in a HOPE 1 or HOPE 2 project.
- A low-income non-purchasing family residing in a project subject to a home-ownership
- program under 24 CFR 248.173.
    - A low-income family displaced as a result of the prepayment of a mortgage or voluntary termination of a mortgage insurance contract under 24 CFR 248.165.
    - A low-income family that qualifies for voucher assistance as a non-purchasing family residing in a project subject to a resident home ownership program.

To determine if the family is income-eligible, the PHA compares the annual income of the family

to the applicable income limit for the family's size.

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

For admission to the program (initial lease-up), 75% of the families must be within the extremely low income limit for the jurisdiction of the receiving PHA in which they want to live.

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

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

Families are required to provide verification of Social Security numbers for all family members age 6 and older prior to admission, if they have been issued a number by the Social Security Administration. This requirement also applies to persons joining the family after admission to the program.

Failure to furnish verification of social security numbers is grounds for denial or termination of assistance.

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

Persons who disclose their Social Security number but cannot provide verification must sign a certification and provide verification within 60 days. Elderly persons must provide verification within 120 days.

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

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

For the citizenship/eligible immigration requirement, the status of each member of the family is considered individually before the family's status is defined.

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

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

Non-citizen students. As defined by HUD in the non-citizen regulations at 24 CFR 5.522, these persons are not eligible for assistance.

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

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

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

The family must have not violated any family obligation during the last year of previous participation in the Section 8 program prior to final eligibility determination.

The PHA will make an exception, if the family member who violated the family obligation is not a current member of the household on the application.
The family must be in good standing regarding any current payment agreement made with another PHA for a previous debt incurred, before this PHA will allow participation in its Section 8 program.

No family member may have been evicted from public housing for any reason during the last 3 years prior to final eligibility determination.

The PHA will check criminal history for all adults in the household to determine whether any member of the family has violated any of the prohibited behaviors as referenced in Chapter 15 of this administrative plan, "Denial or Termination of Assistance."

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

G. TENANT SCREENING [24 CFR 982.307)]

The PHA will take into consideration any of the criteria for admission described in Chapter 15 of this administrative plan, "Denial or Termination of Assistance."
The PHA will not screen family behavior or suitability for tenancy. The PHA will not be liable or responsible to the owner or other persons for the family's behavior or the conduct in tenancy.

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

The owner is responsible for screening families based on their tenancy histories, including such factors as: [24 CFR 082.307(a)(3)]

Payment of rent and utility bills

Caring for a unit and premises

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

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

Sexual Offender subject to state or federal registration

Compliance with other essential conditions of tenancy.

The PHA will give the owner:

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

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

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

H. CHANGES IN ELIGIBILITY PRIOR TO EFFECTIVE DATE OF CONTRACT

Changes that occur during the period between placement on the waiting list and issuance of a voucher may affect the family's eligibility or share of the rental payment.

I. INELIGIBLE FAMILIES

Families who are determined to be ineligible will be notified in writing of the reason for denial and given an opportunity to request an informal review, or an informal hearing if they were denied due to non-citizen status. See Chapter 19 of this administrative plan, "Complaints and Appeals," for additional information about reviews and hearings.

J. PROHIBITED ADMISSIONS CRITERIA [982.202(b)]

Admissions to the program may not be based on where the family lives before admission to the program.

Admission to the program may not be based on:

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

Whether a family decides to participate in a family self-sufficiency (FSS) program; or

Other reasons as listed in Chapter 1 of this administrative plan, "Statement of Policies and Objectives," under the Fair Housing and Reasonable Accommodations section.

Chapter 3

APPLYING FOR ADMISSION
[24 CFR 982.204, 24CFR 983.203, 66FR3607-9]

INTRODUCTION

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

PROHIBITION AGAINST DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, AND STALKING [24 CFR Part 5, Subpart L]

The Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2005 (VAWA) prohibits denial of admission to an otherwise qualified applicant on the basis that the applicant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking. Specifically, Section 606(4)(A) of VAWA adds the following provision to Section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937, which lists contract provisions and requirements for the housing choice voucher program:

- That an applicant or participant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking is not an appropriate reason for denial of program assistance or for denial of admission, if the applicant otherwise qualifies for assistance or admission [24 CFR 5.2005].

Definitions [24 CFR 5.2003]
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 *domestic violence* includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction.

1

- 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 *stalking* means:
  - 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.
- The term *immediate family member* means, with respect to a person:
  - A spouse, parent, brother or sister, or child of that person, or an individual to whom that person stands in the position or place of a parent; or
  - Any other person living in the household of that person and related to that person by blood and marriage.

Notification

PHA Policy

The PHA acknowledges that a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking may have an unfavorable history (e.g., a poor credit history, a record of previous damage to an apartment, a prior arrest record) that would warrant denial under the PHA's policies. Therefore, if the PHA makes a determination to deny admission to an applicant family, the PHA will include in its notice of denial:
A statement of the protection against denial provided by VAWA
A description of PHA confidentiality requirements
A request that an applicant wishing to claim this protection submit to the PHA documentation meeting the specifications below with her or his request for an informal review

Documentation

Victim Documentation

PHA Policy

An applicant claiming that the cause of an unfavorable history is that a member of the applicant family is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking must provide documentation (1) demonstrating the connection between the abuse and the unfavorable history and (2) naming the perpetrator of the abuse. The documentation may

2

consist of any of the following:

A statement signed by the victim certifying that the information provided is true and correct and that it describes bona fide incident(s) of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking

A police or court record documenting the domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking

Documentation signed by a person who has assisted the victim in addressing domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, or the effects of such abuse. This person may be an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider; an attorney; or a medical or other knowledgeable 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.

Perpetrator Documentation

PHA Policy

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

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

Time Frame for Submitting Documentation

PHA Policy

The applicant must submit the required documentation with her or his request for an informal review or must request an extension in writing at that time. If the applicant so requests, the PHA will grant an extension of 10 business days, and will postpone scheduling the applicant's informal review until after it has received the documentation or the extension period has elapsed. If after reviewing the documentation provided by the applicant the PHA determines that the family is eligible for assistance, no informal review will be scheduled and the PHA will proceed with admission of the applicant family.

PHA Confidentiality Requirements [24 CFR 5.2007(a)(1)(v)]

All information provided to the PHA regarding domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, including the fact that an individual is a victim of such violence or stalking, must be retained in confidence and may neither be entered into any shared database nor provided to any related entity, except to the extent that the disclosure (a) is requested or consented to by the individual in writing, (b) is required for use in an eviction proceeding, or (c) is otherwise required by

applicable law.

PHA Policy
If disclosure is required for use in an eviction proceeding or is otherwise required by applicable law, the PHA will inform the victim before disclosure occurs so that safety risks can be identified and addressed.

A. OVERVIEW OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The PHA has two Section 8 waiting list types: one for admission to the tenant-based rental assistance program (referred to as the "tenant-based program") and site-based for admission to the project-based rental assistance program (referred to as the "project-based program").

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

Families who wish to apply for any of the PHA's programs must complete a written pre-application form when application-taking is open, i.e., when applications are being accepted. Pre-applications will be made available in an accessible format upon request from a person with a disability.

When the waiting list is open, any family asking to be placed on the waiting list for Section 8 rental assistance will be given the opportunity to do so by completing an application.

Applications will be made available to interested families upon request.

The application process will involve two phases. The first is the "initial" application for assistance (referred to as a pre-application). This first phase results in the family's placement on the waiting list.

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

B. OPENING/CLOSING OF PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS [24 CFR 982.206, 982.54(d)(1), 24 CFR 982.203(a)(3)&(4)]

Opening the Waiting list
The PHA will utilize the following procedures for opening the waiting list.

When the PHA opens the waiting list, the PHA will advertise through public notice in newspapers, minority publications, the agency website and other media entities the location(s) and program(s) for which pre-applications are being accepted.

The notice will contain:

- The locations where families may access pre-application forms as well as where and when to mail the application.

- The programs for which pre-applications will be taken.

- A brief description of the programs.

- Limitations, if any, on who may apply.

- Opening and close date for acceptance of pre-applications.

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

If the waiting list is open, any family asking to be placed on the waiting list for the Section 8 tenant-based program or a waiting list for the Section 8 project-based program, or both, will be given the opportunity to complete a pre-application.

If the waiting list is open, the PHA will accept pre-applications from families. However, they may not be placed on the waiting list if there is good cause, such as denial of assistance because of action or inaction by members of the family for the grounds stated in **Chapter 15** of this administrative plan, **"Denial or Termination of Assistance."**

Closing the Waiting List

The PHA may stop accepting applications for the tenant-based program , if there are enough applicants to fill anticipated openings for the next twelve (12) months. The PHA may stop accepting applications for a project based site if there are enough applicants to fill immediate openings. The waiting lists may not be closed if it would have a discriminatory effect inconsistent with applicable civil rights laws.

The PHA will announce the last date pre-applications will be accepted in the same notice that advertises the opening of the list.

When the period for accepting applications is over, the PHA will add the new applicants to both tenant based and project based - lists using the following method:

- As the pre-applications are received by the PHA, they will be data-entered, with the date and time of the pre-application recorded. Preference status will be indicated when appropriate for a project based list.
- Once the list is closed and all the pre-applications have been data-entered, a computer
- Lottery will be completed to determine placement order on the tenant based waiting list.
- Applicants will be placed on the list after applicants who were on the list previously. Project based preferences may allow an applicant to move to the top of a specific site's waiting list.

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

The PHA will utilize a preliminary-application form (pre-application). The information is to be filled out by the applicant whenever possible. It may also be mailed to the applicant and, if requested, it will be mailed in an accessible format. Translations will be provided for non-English speaking applicants, where possible.

The purpose of the pre-application is to permit the PHA to assess family eligibility or ineligibility in a preliminary fashion, and to determine placement on the waiting list. The pre-application will contain questions designed to obtain the following information:

- Applicant name and number of family members
- Street address and phone number(s)
- Mailing address (if post office box or other permanent address)
- Amount(s) of income received by household members
- Social Security numbers
- Race/ethnicity
- Request for specific accommodation needed to fully utilize program and services

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

The information on the pre-application will not be verified until the applicant has been selected for final eligibility determination. Final eligibility will be determined when the full application process is completed and all information is verified.
Applicants are required to inform the PHA in writing of changes in address. Applicants are also required to respond to requests from the PHA to update information on their pre-application and to determine their continued interest in assistance.

D. APPLICANT STATUS WHILE ON WAITING LIST [CFR 982.204 & 66FR 3607]

After a preliminary review of the pre-application, if the family is determined to be eligible for the tenant-based program they will be notified in writing (or in an accessible format upon request, as a reasonable accommodation).

The notice will contain the approximate date that assistance may be offered, and will further explain that the estimated date is subject to factors such as turnover and available funding.

This written notification of preliminary eligibility will be:

mailed to the applicant by first class mail, or
distributed to the applicant in the manner requested as a specific accommodation.

E. APPLICANT STATUS WHILE ON THE PROJECT-BASED PROGRAM WAITING LIST [CFR 982.204, 983.203]

After a preliminary review of the pre-application, if the family is determined to be eligible for the project-based program they will be notified in writing (or in an accessible format upon request, as a reasonable accommodation).

The notice will inform the applicant of documentation that is required to demonstrate eligibility for preferences under the particular project-based program site.

This written notification of preliminary eligibility will be:

mailed to the applicant by first class mail, or
distributed to the applicant in the manner requested as a specific accommodation.

F. TIME OF SELECTION

Tenant-based program [24 CFR 982.204]

When funding is available, families will be selected from the waiting list in their determined sequence regardless of family size, subject to income targeting requirements. When there is insufficient funding available for the family at the top of the list, the PHA will not admit any other applicant until funding is available for the first applicant.

Based on the PHA's turnover and the availability of funding, groups of families will be selected from the waiting list to form a final eligibility pool. Selection from the pool will be based on waiting list sequence/completion of verification.

Project-based program [24CFR 983.203; 66FR 3609]

When the owner of dwelling units receiving project-based assistance notifies the PHA of a vacancy in one or more assisted dwelling units, the PHA will give permission to the project to advertise (content and format of advertisement to be approved by the PHA) that they are accepting applications. Applications received will be forwarded to the PHA to be added to the site's waiting list. The PHA will refer to the owner one or more families of the appropriate size on the project-based program waiting list in their determined sequence, subject to income targeting requirements. Prior to making the referral, the PHA will evaluate the family's housing needs and determine their eligibility for Section 8 housing assistance in accordance with Sections G, H, and I below. A family becomes a participant in the project-based program when the family and the owner executes a lease for a unit with project-based assistance. A family that refuses the offer of an assisted unit, or that is turned down for admission to an assisted unit by an owner, maintains its place on the waiting list as though no offer had been made. The owner of assisted dwelling units is responsible for the screening and selection of tenants in accordance with the owner's written tenant selection procedures.

8

G. COMPLETION OF A FULL APPLICATION

Applicants will be required to complete a full application in their own handwriting (unless assistance is needed, or a request for accommodation is made by a person with a disability). Applicants will then be interviewed by PHA staff to review the information on the full application form.

The full application will be mailed to the applicant (or communicated as requested, as an accommodation to a person with a disability) to complete in advance when the applicant is invited to attend the interview.

H. VERIFICATION [24 CFR 982.201(e)]

Information provided by the applicant will be verified, using the verification procedures outlined in Chapter 7 of this administrative plan, "Verification Procedures." Family composition, income, allowances and deductions, assets, full-time student status, eligibility and rent calculation factors, and other pertinent information will be verified.

I. FINAL DETERMINATION AND NOTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY [24 CFR 982.201]

After the verification process is completed, the PHA will make a final determination of eligibility. This decision is based upon information provided by the family, the verification completed by the PHA, and the current eligibility criteria in effect. If the family is determined to be eligible, the PHA will mail the family a notification of eligibility. A briefing will be scheduled in order to issue a voucher to the family and to orient them to the housing program.

Chapter 4

MAINTAINING THE WAITING LIST

[24 CFR Part 5, Subpart D; 982.54(d)(1); 982.204, 982.205, 982.206, 983.203, 66FR 3609]

INTRODUCTION

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

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

A. WAITING LIST [24 CFR 982.204]

The PHA uses two waiting lists for admission to its Section 8 tenant-based assistance program. Persons eligible for the Housing Choice Voucher Program or the Mainstream Housing Opportunities Program are maintained on one list. The other list is for families who have been referred to the Family Unification Program (FUP) by the State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF). The DCF referral form serves the same purpose in the FUP as the pre-application form serves in the other tenant-based programs.

The PHA maintains separate site specific waiting lists for admission to its Section 8 project-based assistance program.

Except for special admissions, applicants will be selected from the PHA waiting list in accordance with policies defined in this administrative plan.

The PHA will maintain information that permits proper selection from the waiting list.
The waiting list contains the following information for each applicant listed:

- Applicant name
- Racial or ethnic designation of the head of household
-Targeted program and preferences qualifications
-Annual (gross) family income
-Number of persons in family

The waiting list will be maintained in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. The application will be a permanent file.

2. All applicants must meet very low-income eligibility requirements as established by HUD. Any exceptions to these requirements, other than those outlined in chapter 2 of this administrative plan, "Eligibility for Admission," must have been approved previously by the HUD field office.

Special Admissions [24 CFR 982.54(d)(e), 982.203]

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

The State of Connecticut Department of Social Services will obligate 20 Housing Choice Vouchers in 2010 and 2011 for homeless families enrolled in the *Study of the Impact of Housing and Services for Homeless Families.* This is a one-time commitment. See order of selection for details.

Order of Selection

The State of Connecticut Department of Social Services will obligate 20 vouchers for homeless families enrolled in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's *Study of the Impact of Housing and Services for Homeless Families* conducted by Abt Associates Inc. Applications for these vouchers, referred to as the "Homeless Families Impact Study" vouchers, will be provided to families who are: enrolled in the study in the Bridgeport/New Haven study site, randomly assigned to the subsidy intervention, and referred to the State of Connecticut Department of Social Services by the Abt Associates study team.

Applicants for the "Homeless Families Impact Study" vouchers must meet the same eligibility requirements as applicants for the tenant-based voucher program. Vouchers will be issued to eligible families in the order in which the qualifying applications are received until the specified numbers of "Homeless Families Impact Study" vouchers are leased.

After the completion of the Homeless Families Impact Study, vacancies in the "Homeless Families Impact Study" vouchers will be filled from the Section 8 program waiting list.

B. WAITING LIST PREFERENCES [24 CFR 982.207]

Tenant-based program preferences:

Pre-applications for admission to the tenant-based program will be selected in lottery-determined order, with the following exception:

1.) The family unification preference

Families who qualify for the family unification preference 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 in the delay of discharge of a child or children to the family from out-of home care, will have their referral/pre-application forms from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to the PHA date- and time-stamped and placed on the Family Unification Program (FUP) waiting list in chronological order, and the PHA will determine if the families are eligible for Section 8 rental assistance.

If a family 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 in the delay of discharge of a child or children to the family from out-of home care is determined eligible by the PHA to receive a housing choice voucher, the family will be invited to participate in the program in accordance with HUD regulations and other requirements, and with policies stated in the DSS administrative plan.

All persons interested in utilizing this preference must be referred to the PHA by DCF. The PHA will accept referrals/pre-applications only from DCF staff. DCF will designate gatekeepers to identify and refer eligible families to the PHA. The PHA will determine if the families are eligible for Section 8 rental assistance.

This preference will enhance the State of Connecticut's continuing efforts to maintain intact families and to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing for families. The Section 8 FUP waiting list will remain open for this preference and the PHA will accept referrals/pre-applications until further notice. The FUP waiting list may not be closed if it would have a discriminatory effect inconsistent with applicable civil rights laws.

Project-based program preferences:

Applicants for admission to the project-based program will be selected in chronological order, subject to the availability of assisted dwelling units that are appropriate to the size of the family. Priority will be given to families who qualify for the following preferences:

1. **The supportive housing preference**. This preference is given to an applicant on the PBV-based voucher project waiting list who qualifies for the targeted CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHAS) funded supportive services linked through the Supportive Housing RFP process to the PBV-funded supportive housing units.

2. **Displaced families' preference**. If a unit to be placed under contract by DSS as part the department's agreement to project-based HCVs in support of the Interagency Pilots Supportive Housing Initiative is occupied by an eligible low-income family on the proposal selection date, the in-place family will be offered the opportunity to lease an appropriately sized project-based assisted unit in that project.

The PHA may place a family referred by an owner of assisted dwelling units on its waiting list,

subject to the provisions in chapter 3 of this administrative plan, "Applicant Status While on the Project-Based Waiting List."

C. DENIAL OF PREFERENCE [5.410(C)(3)]

No preference of any kind will be given to an applicant if a member of the applicant's family was evicted during the past three years from housing assisted under the 1937 Housing Act Program because of drug-related criminal activity, except that the PHA may give an admissions preference if the PHA determines that the evicted person:

1. has successfully completed a rehabilitation program approved by the PHA, or
2. clearly did not participate in or know about the drug-related criminal activity, or
3. no longer participates in any drug-related criminal activity.

D. CHANGES IN PREFERENCE STATUS

Occasionally applicants on the waiting list who did not qualify for a preference at the time they applied for rental assistance will experience a change in circumstances that now qualifies them for a preference. In such cases:

1. It is the applicant's responsibility to contact the PHA.

2. Applicants certifying that they now qualify for a preference will be re-positioned on the waiting list in accordance with their preference and their date and time of application.
3. Applicants will then be informed in writing of their change in status and place on the waiting list.

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

If HUD awards the PHA program funding that is targeted for families living in specified units, the PHA will admit these families under a special admission procedure/will use the assistance for the families living in these units.

These special admissions families will be admitted outside of the regular waiting list process. They are not required to be on the waiting lists. The PHA will maintain separate records of these admissions.

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

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

2. A family residing in a multifamily rental housing project when HUD sells, forecloses or

demolishes the project;

3. For housing covered by the Low-Income Housing Preservation and Resident Homeownership Act of 1990 (41 U.S.C. 4101 et seq.);

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

5. A non-purchasing family residing in a project subject to a homeownership program (under 24 CFR 248.173);

6. A family displaced because of mortgage prepayment or voluntary termination of a mortgage insurance contract (as provided in 24 CFR 248.165); or

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

In addition, the PHA may select the following families for admission to the project-based program without prior placement on the waiting list:

- In-place existing occupants of dwelling units selected by the PHA to receive project-based rental assistance and who are eligible for Section 8 assistance. [24 CFR 983.203(6)(b)]

The PHA may select the following families for tenant-based rental assistance without prior placement on the waiting list:

A family that moves after twelve (12) months of occupancy (in good standing) from a dwelling unit assisted under the PHA project-based program. If tenant-based rental assistance is not available at the time that the family moves, the family will receive priority for the next available tenant-based voucher. [66 FR 3609]

F. FUNDING FOR SPECIFIED CATEGORY OF WAITING LIST FAMILIES [24CFR 982.204 (e), 206 (a)(b)]

When HUD awards funding for a specified category of families meeting specific requirements, the waiting list is searched for eligible families. If there is not a sufficient number of eligible families on the waiting list, the waiting list will be opened to applicants eligible for the specified category. When the pre-application is submitted to the PHA, it will be date- and time-stamped to determine placement order on the waiting list.

Applicants who meet the criteria for a specified category and are admitted under targeted funding, and who are not identified as a special admission, are identified by codes in the automated system and, except for Family Unification Program families, are not maintained on separate waiting lists.

The PHA has the following programs funded for specified categories of waiting list families:

Certain Developments Program for Non-Elderly Persons with Disabilities
Family Unification Program
Mainstream Housing Opportunities Program for Persons with Disabilities
Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing

Family Unification Program

Program Description and Referrals:
Through the linkage of the Department of Social Services and the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Family Unification Program (FUP) will provide a comprehensive array of services to families that have been identified and referred to the PHA by DCF. DCF will refer 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 in the delay of discharge of a child or children to the family from out-of home care, and the PHA will determine if the families are eligible for Section 8 rental assistance.

Waiting List and Tenant Selection Process:
A separate waiting list will be maintained for the Family Unification Program. Referrals/pre-applications will be placed at the bottom of the Family Unification Program waiting list with the date and time of receipt noted.

When an FUP voucher becomes available a family will be selected from the list. After the family is determined eligible to receive a Section 8 subsidy, the family will be admitted to participate in the program in accordance with HUD regulations and other requirements, and with policies stated in the DSS administrative plan.

The PHA's Section 8 FUP waiting list is open and will accept referrals/pre-applications until further notice. The waiting list may not be closed if it would have a discriminatory effect inconsistent with applicable civil rights laws.

The PHA will regularly review the extent of need for FUP vouchers. The PHA will apply a preference for 250 additional housing choice vouchers (i.e., beyond our allocation of 300 FUP vouchers from HUD) from its current allocation as FUP vouchers. This is because DCF has demonstrated that a lack of adequate affordable housing is preventing eligible families from finding suitable housing, thus obstructing unification with a child or children or causing a child or children to be placed out of the home.

Mainstream Housing Opportunities Program for Persons With Disabilities

Program Description:
The Mainstream Housing Opportunities Program for Persons With Disabilities (Mainstream Program) will enhance the State of Connecticut's continuing efforts to provide, decent, safe, and sanitary housing to persons with disabilities.

Waiting List and Tenant Selection Process:
The PHA will identify eligible disabled persons on its waiting list. After the family is determined eligible to receive a Section 8 subsidy, the family will be admitted to participate in the program in accordance with HUD regulations and other requirements, and with policies stated in the DSS administrative plan. If any vouchers remain, the PHA will open its waiting list to disabled persons who have not applied for the PHA's Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program.

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

The PHA will announce the last date applications on which will be accepted in the same notice that advertises the opening of the list.

Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH)

Program Description
The HUD-VASH Program combines the Section 8 HCV Program with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veteran's Affairs Medical Centers (VAMC).

Generally, the HUD-VASH HCV program will be administered in accordance with Section 8 HCV program requirements however Federal Register /Vol. 73, No. 88 allows HUD to waive or specify alternative requirements for any provision of any statute or regulation that HUD administers in connection with this program in order to effectively deliver and administer HUD-VASH voucher assistance. The HUD-VASH Operating Requirements (including the waivers and alternative requirements from HCV program rules) were published in the Federal Register on May 6, 2008.

Referrals, and Waiting List
The VAMC will refer HUD–VASH eligible families to the PHA for the issuance of vouchers. Written documentation of these referrals must be maintained in the tenant file at the PHA. Therefore, the PHA will not have the authority to maintain a waiting list or apply local preferences for HUD– VASH vouchers. Accordingly, section 8(o)(6)(A) of the USHA of 1937, 42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(6)(A), in regard to preferences, has been waived to provide for the effective administration of the program. In addition, 24 CFR 982.202, 982.204, and 982.207, relating to applicant selection from the waiting list and local preferences, are also waived.

Sections 982.203, 982.205, and 982.206 regarding special admissions, cross listing of the waiting list, and opening and closing the waiting list do not apply to the HUD–VASH program. The VAMC will screen all families in accordance with its screening criteria. By agreeing to administer the HUD– VASH program, the PHA is relinquishing its authority to determine the eligibility of families in accordance with regular HCV program rules and PHA policies.

Denial of Applicants
Specifically, under the HUD–VASH program, PHAs will not have the authority to screen

potentially eligible families or deny assistance for any grounds permitted under 24 CFR 982.552 (broad denial for violations of HCV program requirements) and 982.553 (specific denial for criminals and alcohol abusers), with one exception. PHAs will still be 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, the Department is exercising its authority to waive 42 U.S.C. 1437d(s); 42 U.S.C. 13661(a), (b), and (c); and 24 CFR Sections 982.552 and 982.553, with the exception of 982.553(a)(2)(i), which requires denial of admission to certain registered sex offenders.

Voucher Term

Recognizing the challenges that HUD– VASH participants may face with their housing search, HUD–VASH vouchers must have an initial search term of at least 120 days. Therefore, § 982.303(a), which states that the initial search term must be at least 60 days, shall not apply, since the initial term must be at least 120 days.

One 60-day extension to participants will be granted upon written request. No further extensions will be approved. The total search time will be for a maximum of 180 days.

Case Management Requirements

As a condition of rental assistance the HUD-VASH family must receive case management services from the VAMC. Failure to participate, without good cause will result in termination of HUD-VASH voucher assistance as verified by the VAMC. However, if the VAMC determines the family no longer requires case management services, the family will be offered continued HCV assistance and transferred to a Housing Choice Voucher pending funding availability so the HUD-VASH voucher may be used by another family referred by the VAMC.

With the exception of the above statements, all other provisions of the Housing Choice Voucher Program apply.

G. INCOME TARGETING

In accordance with the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998, each fiscal year the PHA will reserve a minimum of seventy-five percent (75%) of its Section 8 new admissions for families whose income does not exceed 30 percent of the area median income. HUD refers to these families as "extremely low-income families." The PHA will admit families who qualify under the extremely low-income limit to meet the income targeting requirement, regardless of preference.

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

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

H. INCOME TARGETING ELIGIBILITY [24 CFR 982.207]

Change in Circumstances

If the family's verified annual income, at final eligibility determination, does not fall under the extremely low-income limit and the family was selected for income targeting purposes before a family or families with a higher preference, the family will be returned to the waiting list.

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

The PHA will periodically send applicants an update inquiry to ensure the applicant's continued interest in, and need for, housing. The PHA will conduct this process at least every three years. An applicant who does not return the inquiry by the requested deadline date will have his or her name removed from the waiting list.

The project-based waiting lists will be purged at least annually.

An extension of ten (10) days to respond will be granted, if requested and needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability.

Any mailings to the applicant which require a response will state that failure to respond within 15 days will result in the applicant's name being dropped from the waiting list.

If a letter is returned by the post office without a forwarding address, the applicant will be removed without further notice, and the envelope and letter will be maintained in the file. If a letter is returned with a forwarding address, it will be re-mailed to the address indicated.

If a family is removed from the waiting list for failure to respond, the Housing Director may reinstate the family if s/he determines the lack of response was due to PHA error or family medical disability. The PHA will reinstate the applicant in the family's former position on the waiting list.

Chapter 5

SUBSIDY STANDARDS
[24 CFR 982.54(d)(9)]

INTRODUCTION

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

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

The PHA does not determine who shares a bedroom/sleeping room, but there must be at least one person per bedroom on the voucher. The PHA's subsidy standards for determining voucher size shall be applied in a manner consistent with fair housing guidelines.

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

All standards in this section relate to the number of bedrooms on the voucher, not the family's actual living arrangements.

The unit size on the voucher remains the same as long as the family composition remains the same, regardless of the actual unit size rented.

Persons of different generations, persons of the opposite sex (other than spouses), and unrelated adults should be allocated a separate bedroom. Clarification: parents and children under the age of six are not required to share the same bedroom;

Foster children will be included in determining unit size only if they will be in the unit for more than 6 months. A *foster child* is a child that is in the legal guardianship of a state, 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 child who is temporarily absent due to placement in foster care is considered a family member when determining unit size.

Live-in attendants may be provided a separate bedroom. No additional bedrooms are provided for the attendant's family.

Space may be provided for a child who is away at school but who lives with the family during school recesses.

A pregnant woman will be determined as a two-person household when determining unit size.

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

GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING VOUCHER SIZE

Voucher Size	Persons in Household (Minimum #)	Persons in Household (Maximum #)
0 Bedroom	1	1
1 Bedroom	1	2
2 Bedrooms	2	4
3 Bedrooms	3	6
4 Bedrooms	4	8
5 Bedrooms	6	10
6 Bedrooms	8	12

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

The PHA shall grant exceptions from the subsidy standards if the family requests and the PHA determines the exceptions are justified by the relationship, age, sex, health or disability of family members, or other individual circumstances.

The PHA will grant an exception upon request as an accommodation for persons with disabilities.

Circumstances may dictate a larger size than the subsidy standards permit when persons cannot share a bedroom because of a need, such as a:

- Verified medical or health reason; or

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

Request for Exception to Subsidy Standards

The family may request a larger family unit-sized voucher than indicated by the PHA's subsidy standards. Such request must be made in writing within 30 days of the PHA's determination of family unit size. The request must explain the need or justification for a larger family unit-sized voucher. Documentation verifying the need or justification will be required as appropriate.

Requests based on health-related reasons must be verified by a doctor/medical professional/ social service professional.

PHA error

If the PHA errs in the bedroom size designation, the family will be re-issued a voucher of the appropriate size so that the family is not penalized.

Changes for Applicants

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

Changes for Participants

All members of the family residing in the unit must be approved by the PHA. The family must obtain approval for any additional family member before the new member occupies the unit except for additions by birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody, in which case the family must inform the PHA within 30 days. The above-referenced guidelines will apply.

Underhoused Families

If a unit does not meet HQS living space standards due to an increase in family size (i.e., the unit is too small), the PHA will issue a new voucher of the appropriate size and assist the family in locating a suitable unit.

- The PHA will also notify the family of the circumstances under which an exception will be granted, such as:

  If a family with a disability is under-housed in an accessible unit.

  If a family requires the additional bedroom because of a health problem which has been verified by the PHA.

  The family has been unable to locate a unit within 60 days.

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

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

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

   The payment standard amount for the family unit size, or

   The payment standard amount for the unit size rented by the family.

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

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

HQS GUIDELINES FOR UNIT SIZE SELECTED

	Maximum # in Household
0 Bedroom	1
1 Bedroom	4
2 Bedrooms	6
3 Bedrooms	8
4 Bedrooms	10
5 Bedrooms	12
6 Bedrooms	14

Chapter 6

FACTORS RELATED TO TOTAL TENANT PAYMENT AND FAMILY SHARE DETERMINATION

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

INTRODUCTION

The PHA will use the methods set forth in this administrative plan to verify and determine that family income at admission and re-examination are correctly calculated. The accurate calculation of annual income and of adjusted income will ensure that families are not paying more or less money for rent than is their obligation under the regulations

This chapter defines the allowable expenses and deductions to be subtracted from annual income and how the presence or absence of household members may affect the total tenant payment (TTP). Income and TTP are calculated in accordance with 24 CFR Part 5, Subparts E and F, and further instructions set forth in notices and memoranda issued by HUD. The formula for the calculation of TTP is specific and is not subject to interpretation. The PHA's policies in this chapter address those areas which allow the PHA discretion to define terms and to develop standards in order to ensure consistent application of the various factors that relate to the determination of TTP.

A. INCOME AND ALLOWANCES [24 CFR 5.609]

Income includes all monetary amounts which are received on behalf of the family. For purposes of calculating the total tenant payment, HUD defines in the federal regulations what is to be included and what is to be excluded. In accordance with this definition, all income which is not specifically excluded in the regulations is counted.

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

Adjusted income is defined as the annual income minus any expenses or deductions allowed by HUD.

HUD has established five allowable deductions from annual income:

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

2. Elderly/disabled allowance: $400 per family for families whose head or spouse is age sixty-two (62) or over or disabled.

The sum of the following, to the extent that the sum exceeds 3% of annual income:

3. Allowable medical expenses which are not reimbursed, and which are deducted for all family members of an eligible elderly/disabled family.

4. Child care expenses deducted for the care of children under age thirteen (13) when child care is necessary to allow an adult member to work, attend school, or actively seek employment.

5. Allowable disability assistance expenses deducted for attendant care or for any auxiliary apparatus for persons with disabilities, if these are needed to enable the individual or adult family member to work.

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

The annual income for qualified families may not be increased as a result of increases in the earned income of a family member who is a person with disabilities, beginning on the date on which the increase in earned income begins and continuing for a cumulative twelve (12) month period. After the disabled family receives twelve (12) cumulative months of the full exclusion, annual income determinations will include a phase-in period during which one-half the earned income will be excluded from annual income for a period of an additional twelve (12) cumulative months.
A family that qualifies to receive the earned income exclusion is a disabled family that is receiving tenant-based rental assistance under the housing choice voucher program, and:

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

whose annual income increases as a result of increased earnings by a family member who is a person with disabilities participating in any economic self-sufficiency or other job training program; or

whose annual income increases as a result of the new employment or increased earnings of a family member during or within six months after receiving assistance, benefits or services under any state TANF program, provided that the total amount of the increase over a six-month period is at least $500.

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

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

Amounts to be excluded are any earned income increases of a family member who is a person with disabilities during participation in an economic self-sufficiency or job training program but not increases that occur after the conclusion of their participation, unless the training provides continuing assistance, training or mentoring which continues after employment begins.

The amount of TANF benefits received in the six-month period includes monthly income and such benefits and services as one-time payments, wage subsidies or transportation assistance.

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

Initial Twelve-Month Exclusion

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

Second Twelve-Month Exclusion

During the second cumulative twelve (12) month period, beginning immediately after the expiration of the initial cumulative twelve (12) month period referred to above, the PHA must exclude from the annual income of a qualified family fifty per cent (50%) of the total amount of any increase in the income of a family member who is a person with disabilities which occurs as a result of the employment of that family member, when that amount represents an increase over the income of that family member prior to the beginning of such employment.

Maximum Four Year Period During Which the Disallowance Applies

The earned income disallowance is limited to a lifetime 48-month period for each family member who is a person with disabilities. For each family member who is a person with disabilities, the disallowance only applies for a maximum of 12 months of full exclusion of incremental increase, and a maximum of 12 months of fifty per cent (50%) phase-in exclusion during the 48-month period starting from the date of the initial exclusion.

If the period of increased income does not last for 12 consecutive months, the disallowance period may be resumed at any time within the 48-month period, and continued until the disallowance has been applied for a total of 12 months of each disallowance (the initial 12-month full exclusion and the second 12-month phase-in 50% exclusion), provided that both 12-month periods must end within the 48-month period which began on the date when the initial 12-month disallowance began. If both 12-month periods do not end within the 48-month period which began on the date when the initial 12-month disallowance began (i.e., the date of the initial exclusion), the total amount of the disallowance shall be the total disallowance accumulated during the 48-month period.

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

Applicability to Child Care Expense and Disability Assistance Expense Deductions

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

Tracking the Earned Income Exclusion

The earned income exclusion will be reported on the HUD 50058 Family Report form. Documentation will be included in the family's file to show the reason why the increase in earned income did not result in an increase in tenant rent.

*Such documentation will include:

* Date on which the increase in earned income was reported by the family.

* Name of the family member whose earned income increased.

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

* Amount of the increase in earned income (i.e., the amount to be excluded).

* Date on which the increase in income is first excluded from annual income.

* Dates (if any) on which the increase in earned income ended and then resumed during the initial cumulative 12-month period of exclusion.

* Date on which the family member had received a total of 12 months of the initial exclusion.

* Date on which the 12-month phase-in period began.

* Dates (if any) on which the increase in earned income ended and then resumed during the second cumulative 12-month (phase-in) period of exclusion.

* Date on which the family member had received a total of 12 months of the phase-in exclusion.

* Ending date of the maximum 48-month (four year) period during which the disallowance applied (48 months from the date of the initial earned income disallowance).

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

[INSTRUCTION: It is a PHA policy decision whether or not to conduct interim re-examinations for income increases. HUD has not provided guidance on how the mandatory earned income disallowance is to be implemented for PHAs that do not conduct interim re-examinations for income increases.]

Inapplicability to Admission

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

C. MINIMUM RENT [24 CFR 5.630]

Minimum Rent

The minimum rent is $50. Minimum rent refers to the total tenant payment and is the minimum amount a family pays towards rent and utilities (combined) when it is applied.

Hardship Requests for an Exception to Minimum Rent

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

Criteria for Hardship Exception

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

The family has lost eligibility or is awaiting an eligibility determination for federal, state, or local assistance; including a family with a member who is a non-citizen lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Naturalization Act, and who would be entitled to public benefits but for Title IV of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996, or

The family would be evicted as a result of the imposition of the minimum rent requirement, or

The income of the family has decreased because of changed circumstances, including loss of employment, death in the family, or other circumstances as determined by the PHA or HUD.

PHA Notification to Families of Right to Hardship Exception

The PHA will notify all families subject to the minimum rent of their right to request a minimum rent hardship exception. Those families subject to the minimum rent are those for whom the minimum rent is the greatest figure in the calculation of TTP as determined by the following: 30% of monthly adjusted income, 10% of monthly income, or minimum rent.

If the minimum rent is the greatest figure in the calculation of total tenant payment, PHA staff will include in the family's file a copy of the notice regarding the family's right to make a hardship request which has been provided to the family.

The PHA notification to families will advise them that hardship exception determinations are subject to the PHA review and hearing procedures. All requests for minimum rent hardship exceptions are required to be made in writing. Requests for minimum rent hardship exceptions must include a statement of the family circumstances that qualify the family for an exception.

The PHA will promptly review all family requests made for exception to the minimum rent due to financial hardship. The PHA will use its standard verification procedures to verify circumstances which are claimed to have resulted in financial hardship.

Suspension of Minimum Rent

The PHA will grant the minimum rent exception to all families who request it, effective the first of the following month. The minimum rent will be suspended until the PHA determines whether a hardship exists and, if it exists, whether the hardship is temporary or long-term.

Suspension means that the PHA must not enforce the minimum rent calculation until the PHA has made its decision whether to grant a request for an exception. During the minimum rent suspension period, the family will not be required to pay a minimum rent and the housing assistance payment will be increased accordingly.

Temporary Hardship

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

The PHA will offer a repayment agreement to the family for any such rent not paid during the temporary hardship period (see Chapter18 of this administrative plan, "Owner or Family Debts to the PHA," for the repayment agreement policy).

Long-Term Hardship

If the PHA determines that there is a qualifying long-term financial hardship, the PHA must exempt the family from the minimum rent requirement for as long as the hardship continues. The exception from minimum rent shall apply from the first day of the month following the family's request for exemption. Every 90 days, the family will be required to demonstrate that the circumstances that qualify the family for an exception continue to exist.

Denial of Hardship Exception

If the PHA determines that there is not a qualifying financial hardship, the PHA must promptly notify the family in writing of the denial of its request. The PHA will offer a repayment agreement to the family for any rent not paid during the period when the PHA was evaluating the hardship exception request (see Chapter 18 of this administrative plan, "Owner or Family Debts to the PHA," for the repayment agreement policy).

D. DEFINITION OF TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT ABSENCE

[24 CFR 982.54(d)(10), 982.312, 982.551]

It is the responsibility of the head of household to report changes in family composition. The PHA will evaluate absences from the unit using this policy. ***Should the absence fall during the recertification period, including HQS inspections, it is the responsibility of the head of household to ensure the appropriate program requirements are completed.***

Temporary Absence of Any Member

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

If the spouse is temporarily absent and in the military, all military pay and allowances (except hazardous duty pay when a person is exposed to hostile fire, and any other exceptions to military pay which HUD may define) is counted as income.

Permanent Absence of Any Member

Any member of the household will be considered permanently absent if she or he is away from the unit for three (3) consecutive months except as otherwise provided in this chapter. Income of persons permanently absent will not be counted.

Absence due to Medical Reasons

If any family member leaves the household to enter a facility such as hospital, nursing home, or rehabilitation center, the PHA will seek advice from a reliable qualified source as to the likelihood and timing of their return. If the verification indicates that the family member will be confined to a nursing home, the family member will be considered absent. If, within a calendar year, the verification indicates that the family member will return in less than three (3) months, the family member will not be considered absent.

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

Absence Due to Full-time Student Status

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

A student (other than the head of household or spouse) who attends school away from home but lives with the family during school recesses may, at the family's choice, be considered either temporarily or permanently absent. Income over $480 is not counted for full-time students. If the family decides that the member is permanently absent, income of that member will not be included in total household income, the member will not be included on the lease, and the member will not be included for determination of voucher size.

Absence Due to Incarceration

If the sole member of a family is incarcerated for more than 3 months, she or he will be considered permanently absent. Any member of the family other than the sole member will be considered permanently absent if she or he is incarcerated for three (3) consecutive months. The PHA will determine if the reason for incarceration is for drug-related or violent criminal activity.

Absence of Children Due to Placement in Foster Care

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

If the time period is to be greater than twelve (12) months from the date of removal of the child or children, the voucher size will be reduced. If all children are removed from the home permanently, the voucher size will be reduced in accordance with the PHA's subsidy standards.

Absence of Entire Family

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

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

Families must notify their landlord and PHA if they are going to be absent from the unit for more than thirty (30) consecutive days. Approval will be granted by the PHA on a case by case basis.

If the entire family is absent from the assisted unit for more than ninety (90) consecutive days, the unit will be considered to be vacated and the assistance will be terminated.

Absent means that no family member is residing in the unit.

In order to determine if the family is absent from the unit, the PHA may:

Write letters to the family at the unit
Telephone the family at the unit
Interview neighbors
Verify if utilities are in service
Check with the post office

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

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

Caretaker for Children

If neither parent remains in the household and the appropriate agency has determined that another adult is to be brought into the assisted unit to care for the children for an indefinite period, the PHA will treat that adult as a visitor until court-awarded custody or legal guardianship has been awarded to the caretaker. The voucher will then be transferred to the caretaker.

If the appropriate agency cannot confirm the guardianship status of the caretaker, the PHA will review the status at thirty (30) day intervals.

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

When the PHA approves a person to reside in the unit as caretaker for the children, the income of

the caretaker should be counted pending a final disposition. The PHA will work with the appropriate service agencies and the landlord to provide a smooth transition in these cases.

If a member of the household is subject to a court order that restricts him or her from the home for more than three (3) months, the person will be considered permanently absent.

Visitors

Any adult, regardless of degree of relationship, not included on the HUD form 50058 who has been in the unit for more than thirty (30) consecutive days without PHA approval will be considered to be living in the unit as an unauthorized household member.

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

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

If the PHA has evidence, which indicates the individual has been residing in the unit for more than thirty (30) days, the family will be terminated since prior approval was not requested for the addition. The family will have the opportunity to request an informal hearing to refute the evidence.

Minors and college students who were part of the family but who now live away from home during the school year and are no longer on the lease may visit for up to sixty (60) consecutive days per year without being considered a member of the household.

In a joint custody arrangement, if the minor is in the household less than 51% of the year, the minor will be considered to be an eligible visitor and not a family member.

Reporting Additions to Owner and PHA

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

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

Families are required to report any additions to the household in writing to the PHA within thirty (30) days of the move-in date.

An interim re-examination will be conducted in the event of any additions to the household.

Reporting Absences to the PHA

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

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

The PHA will conduct an interim evaluation for changes which affect the total tenant payment in accordance with the interim policy.

E. AVERAGING INCOME

When annual income cannot be anticipated for a full twelve months, the PHA may:

1. Average all known sources of income that vary, in order to compute an annual income, or

2. Annualize the income anticipated for a shorter period, subject to a re-determination at the end of the shorter period.

If there are possible bonuses or overtime payments which the employer cannot anticipate for the next twelve (12) months, bonuses and overtime received the previous year will be used.

If an estimate can be made for those families whose income fluctuates from month to month by averaging, this estimate will be used so as to reduce the number of interim adjustments.

The method to be used depends upon the regularity, source and type of income.

F. MINIMUM INCOME

There is no minimum income requirement. Families who report zero income are required to complete a written certification of no income every 90 days.

G. INCOME OF PERSON PERMANENTLY CONFINED TO NURSING HOME
[24 CFR 982.54(d)(10)]

If a family member is permanently confined to a hospital or nursing home and there is a family member left in the household, the PHA will calculate the income by using the following methodology and use the income figure which would result in a lower payment by the family:

1. Exclude the income of the person permanently confined to the nursing home and give the family no deductions for the medical expenses of the confined family member, or

2. Exclude the income and deductions of the member if his/her income goes directly to the facility.

H. REGULAR CONTRIBUTIONS AND GIFTS [24 CFR 5.609]

Regular contributions and gifts received from persons outside the household are counted as income for calculation of the total tenant payment.

Any contribution or gift received every six (6) months or more frequently will be considered a regular contribution or gift, unless the amount totals less than $500 per year. This includes rent and utility payments made on behalf of the family as well as other cash or non-cash contributions provided on a regular basis. It does not include casual contributions or sporadic gifts. (See Chapter 7 of this administrative plan, "Verification Procedures," for further definition.)

I. ALIMONY AND CHILD SUPPORT [24 CFR 5.609]

Regular alimony and child support payments are counted as income for purposes of the calculation of total tenant payment.

The PHA will count court-awarded amounts for alimony and child support unless the PHA verifies that (1) the payments are *not* being made and (2) the family has made reasonable efforts to collect the amounts due, including filing with the courts or agencies responsible for enforcing payments.

The PHA will accept as verification that the family is receiving an amount less than the award if:

The PHA receives verification from the agency responsible for enforcement or collection.

The family furnishes documentation of a child support or alimony collection action filed through a child support enforcement or collection agency, or documentation that they have filed enforcement or collection action through an attorney.

It is the family's responsibility to supply a certified copy of the divorce decree.

Should alimony or child support be received in a lump sum(s) due to a court action or voluntary payment(s) on a court ordered arrearage, the payment(s) will be treated as income and calculated as such using the methodology outlined under the heading LUMP-SUM RECEIPTS.

J. LUMP-SUM RECEIPTS [24 CFR 5.609]

Lump-sum additions to family assets, such as inheritances, insurance payments (including payments under health and accident insurance or worker's compensation), capital gains, and settlement for personal or property losses are not included in income but may be included in assets.

Lump-sum payments caused by delays in processing periodic payments such as unemployment or welfare assistance are counted as income. Lump sum payments from Social Security or SSI are excluded from income, but any amount remaining will be considered an asset. Deferred periodic payments which have accumulated due to a dispute will be treated the same as periodic payments which are deferred due to delays in processing.

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

The PHA uses a calculation method which calculates prospectively or retroactively, depending on the circumstances.

The PHA will calculate prospectively if the family reported the payment within thirty (30) days and retroactively to the date of receipt if the receipt was not reported within that time frame.

Prospective Calculation Methodology

If the payment is reported on a timely basis, the calculation will be done prospectively and will result in an interim adjustment calculated as follows:

the entire lump-sum payment will be added to the annual income at the time of the interim.

Retroactive Calculation Methodology

1. The PHA will go back to the date on which the lump-sum payment was received, or to the date of admission, whichever is closer.

2. The PHA will determine the amount of income for each certification period, including the period during which the lump sum was received, and recalculate the tenant rent for each certification period to determine the amount due the PHA.

The amount owed by the family is a collectible debt even if the family becomes unassisted.

Attorney Fees

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

M. CHILD CARE EXPENSES [24 CFR 5.603]

Child care expenses for children under age thirteen (13) may be deducted from annual income if They enable an adult to work, to attend school, or to actively seek employment.

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

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

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

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

Amount of expense: Licensed, registered or otherwise regulated childcare providers will provide a signed statement of childcare expenses. The maximum allowance for all other child care is $89.00 per child, per week

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

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

Non-prescription medicines will be counted toward medical expenses for families who qualify, if the family furnishes legible receipts.

O. PRO-RATION OF ASSISTANCE FOR MIXED FAMILIES [24 CFR 5.520]

Applicability

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

Mixed families that were participants on / as of June 19, 1995, and that do not qualify for continued assistance must be offered pro-rated assistance (see Chapter 12 of this administrative plan, "Re-examinations.") Mixed applicant families are entitled to pro-rated assistance. Families that become mixed after June 19, 1995 by the addition of an ineligible member are entitled to pro-rated assistance.

Pro-rated Assistance Calculation

Pro-rated assistance is calculated by determining the amount of assistance payable if all family members were eligible and multiplying by the percent of the family members who actually are eligible. Total tenant payment is the gross rent minus the pro-rated assistance.

P. INCOME CHANGES RESULTING FROM WELFARE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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

fraud by a family member in connection with the welfare program; or

failure to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program; or

non-compliance with a work activities requirement.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The amount of imputed welfare income is offset by the amount of additional income a family receives that begins after the sanction is imposed.

When additional income is at least equal to the imputed welfare income, the imputed welfare income is reduced to zero.

Verification Before Denying a Request to Reduce Rent

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

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

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

the reason for the reduction; and

any subsequent changes in term or amount of reduction.

Q. UTILITY ALLOWANCE AND UTILITY REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENTS

[24 CFR 982.153, 982.517, 982.514(b)]

The same utility allowance schedule is used for all tenant-based programs.

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

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

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

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

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

The approved utility allowance schedule is given to families along with their voucher. The utility allowance calculation is based on the actual unit size selected.

Where families provide their own range and refrigerator, the PHA will establish an allowance adequate for the family to purchase or rent a range or refrigerator, even if the family already owns either appliance. Allowances for ranges and refrigerators will be based on the lesser of the cost of leasing or purchasing the appropriate appliance over a twelve (12) month period.

Where the calculation on the HUD form 50058 results in a utility reimbursement due the family, the PHA will provide a utility reimbursement payment for the family each month. The check will be made out directly to the tenant: unless the tenant has agreed, in writing, to payment directly to utility companies, in which case the check will be made out directly to the utility companies.

The PHA will approve a higher utility allowance for a family including a person with a disability, if needed.

Chapter 7

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

INTRODUCTION

HUD regulations require that the factors of eligibility and total tenant payment/family share be verified by the PHA. PHA staff will obtain written verification from independent sources (i.e., third party verification) whenever possible. If it is not possible for PHA staff to obtain third party verification, staff will document in the tenant files why they were not able to do so.

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

EIV POLICY AND PROCEDURES

RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION POLICY

All Up Front Income Verification UIV (EIV) documents will be maintained in the participants file, which will be placed in a locked file cabinet. Unused UIV (EIV) data, Credit reports, and Criminal reports will be placed in a separate locked file cabinet and the Housing Agency will occasionally shred these materials. When shredding is used for disposition the paper will be shred to effect 5/16 wide or smaller so the strips are not readable.

COMPUTER MATCHING

Where allowed by HUD and/or other State or local agencies, computer matching will be done. HUD has conducted a computer matching initiative to independently verify resident income. The Up Front Income Verification system also known as EIV created by HUD allows the PHA to access income information and compare it to information submitted by PHA's on the HUD 50058 form. To obtain the EIV data there MUST be a HUD 9886 form signed in the participants file, without the signed HUD 9886 form EIV can't be accessed. The programs administrators' Security Officer, or designated staff, will assure that a copy of HUD 9886 form has been signed by all household members 18 years of age and older is in the household file. The data provided via EIV system must be protected to ensure that it is only used for official purposes and not disclosed in any way that would violate the privacy of the individuals represented in the system data.

A. METHODS OF VERIFICATION AND TIME ALLOWED [24 CFR 982.516]

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

1. Up-front Income Verification **(EIV, EMS, CCSES etc.)** when available
2. third-party written
3. third-party oral
4. review of documents
5. certification/self-declaration

The PHA will allow three (3) weeks for return of third-party written verification. PHA staff will allow two (2) weeks per attempt to obtain other types of verification before going on to the next method. The PHA will place documentation in the tenant file as to why third party written verification was not obtained. When the applicant or tenant brings verification (excluding 3rd party verification) to the PHA, in person, the verification will be date stamped and a date stamped copy will be returned to the tenant.

For applicants, verifications may not be more than 60 days old at the time of voucher issuance. For participants, verifications are valid for 120 days from date of receipt.

Up Front Income Verification (UIV)

Up-front verification refers to the PHA's use of the verification tools available from independent sources that maintain computerized information about earnings, and benefits. (HUD's EIV, EMS, CCSES etc.)

There may be legitimate differences between information provided by the family and **EIV** generated information. No adverse action can be taken against a family until the PHA has independently verified the **EIV** information and the family has been given the opportunity to contest any adverse findings through the informal review/ hearing process.

Under no circumstances should a family be terminated solely on information generated through use of **EIV**.

Third-Party Written Verification

Third-party written verification is used to verify information directly from the source. Third-party written verification forms will be sent and returned via first class mail and/or facsimile (FAX) transmittal. Each adult family member (i.e., age eighteen or older) will be required to sign an authorization allowing an information source to release the specified information.

Verifications received by facsimile (FAX) directly from the source are considered third-party written verifications.

Third-party verification forms will not be hand-carried by the family with the exception of computer printouts delivered by the family from the following agencies:

* Social Security Administration
* Veterans Administration
* State Department of Social Services (Welfare Assistance)
* State Labor Department (Unemployment Compensation)
* State or federal courts

Third-Party Oral Verification

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

Review of Documents

In the event that third-party written or oral verification is unavailable the PHA will notate the file accordingly and utilize documents provided by the family as the primary source if the documents provide complete information.

All such documents, excluding government checks, will be photocopied and retained in the applicant file. In cases where documents are viewed which cannot be photocopied, staff viewing the document(s) will complete a Certification of Document Viewed or Person Contacted.

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

Printed wage stubs
Computer print-outs from the employer
Signed letters (provided that the information is confirmed by phone)
Other documents noted in this chapter as acceptable verification

Self-Certification/Self-Declaration

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

Self-certification is accomplished by means of an affidavit which must be witnessed by a representative of the PHA and which is obtained under penalty of perjury.

Discrepancy Resolution Procedure

If third-party verification is received after documents have been accepted as provisional verification, and there is a discrepancy, the PHA will attempt to contact both parties providing information in order to resolve the discrepancy. The PHA will place in the family file an explanation of the manner in which the discrepancy was resolved.

B. RELEASE OF INFORMATION [24 CFR 5.230]

All adult family members will be required to sign a copy of HUD form 9886, Authorization for Release of Information/Privacy Act Form.

In addition, all adult family members will be required to sign specific authorization forms when information is needed that is not covered by HUD form 9886.

Each member requested to consent to the release of specific information will be provided with a copy of the appropriate forms for their review and signature.

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

C. COMPUTER MATCHING

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

When the PHA receives notification from HUD that a family has been sent an "income discrepancy" letter, the PHA will:

Wait 40 days after the date of notification before contacting tenant.

After 40 days following the date of notification, the PHA will contact the tenant by mail asking the family to promptly furnish any letter or other notice by HUD concerning the amount or verification of family income.

The PHA will fully document the contact in the tenant's file, including a copy of the letter to the family.

When the family provides the required information, the PHA will verify the accuracy of the income information received from the family, review the PHA's interim recertification policy, will identify unreported income, will charge retroactive rent as appropriate, and change the amount of rent or terminate assistance, as appropriate, based on the information.

If tenant fails to respond to PHA:

The PHA will ask HUD to send a second letter.

After an additional 40 days, the PHA will ask HUD to send a third letter.

After an additional 40 days, the PHA will send a letter to the head of household, warning of the consequences if the family fails to contact the PHA within two weeks.

<u>If the tenant claims a letter from HUD was not received:</u>

The PHA will ask HUD to send a second letter with a verified address for the tenant.

After 40 days, the PHA will contact the tenant family.

If the tenant family still claims they have not received a letter, the PHA will ask HUD to send a third letter.

After an additional 40 days, the PHA will set up a meeting with the family to complete IRS forms 4506 and 8821.

If the tenant family fails to meet with the PHA or will not sign the IRS forms, the PHA will send a warning letter to the head of household, notifying the family that termination proceedings will begin within one week if the tenant fails to meet with the PHA and/or sign forms.

<u>If tenant does receive a discrepancy letter from HUD:</u>

The PHA will set up a meeting with the family.

If the family fails to attend the meeting, the PHA will reschedule the meeting.

If the family fails to attend the second meeting, the PHA will send a termination warning.

The family must bring the original HUD discrepancy letter to the PHA.

If tenant disagrees with the Federal tax data contained in the HUD discrepancy letter:

The PHA will ask the tenant to provide documented proof that the tax data is incorrect.

If the tenant does not provide documented proof, the PHA will obtain proof to verify the Federal tax data using third party verification.

D. ITEMS TO BE VERIFIED [24 CFR 982.516]

All income, including income exclusions.

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

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

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

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

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

Disability for determination of preference status, allowances or deductions

Proof of legal identity

U.S. citizenship/eligible immigrant status

Social Security Numbers for all family members over 6 years of age or older who have been issued a social security number.

Familial/Marital status when needed for head or spouse definition.

All utilities that are the tenant's responsibility are operational

E. VERIFICATION OF INCOME [24 CFR 982.516]

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

Employment Income

Verification forms request the employer to specify the:

- Dates of employment

- Amount and frequency of pay

- Date of the last pay increase

- Likelihood of change of employment status and effective date of any known salary increase during the next 12 months

- Year to date earnings

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

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Employment verification form completed by the employer, or income verification provided by a state or federal agency.

2. Third-party oral verification.

3. Check stubs or earning statements for a minimum of six (6) weeks or three (3) bi-weekly pay periods which indicate the employee's gross pay, frequency of pay or year-to-date earnings, or W-2 forms plus an income tax return.

4. Self-certifications or income tax returns signed by the family, which may be used to verify self-employment income, or income from tips and other gratuities.

Self-Employment

The PHA will require the family member to supply the IRS form 1099 as verification of earned income.

If a family member has been self-employed for less than three (3) months, the PHA will accept the family member's certified estimate of income and schedule an interim reexamination in three (3) months. If the family member has been self-employed for three (3) to twelve (12) months the PHA will require the family to provide documentation of income and expenses for this period and use that

information to project income. If in fact the family member's period of self employment spans from one tax year to the next, even if the employment period is less than three months, the IRS form 1099 will be required for the previous year.

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

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

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

Social Security, Pensions, Supplementary Security Income (SSI), Disability Income

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Benefit verification form completed by agency providing the benefits.
2. Award or benefit notification letters prepared and signed by the providing agency.
3. Computer report obtained electronically or in hard copy.

Unemployment Compensation

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Verification form completed by the unemployment compensation agency.
2. Computer printouts from unemployment office stating payment dates and amounts.
3. Payment stubs.
4. EMS print out

Welfare Payments or General Assistance

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. PHA verification form completed by payment provider.

2. Written statement from payment provider indicating the amount of payment, start date of payments, and anticipated changes in payment in the next 12 months.

3. Computer-generated Notice of Action.

Alimony or Child Support Payments

Acceptable methods of verification include the following, in descending order of priority:

1. Copy of a separation or settlement agreement or a divorce decree stating the amount and type of support and the payment schedules, or a statement provided by the child support agency.

2. A notarized letter from the person paying the support.

3. Copy of latest check, or the payment stubs from the Court Trustee. The PHA must record the date, amount, and number of the check.

4. If payments are irregular, the family must provide:

   A copy of the separation or settlement agreement, or a divorce decree stating the amount and type of support and payment schedules.

   A statement from the agency responsible for enforcing payments to show that the family has filed for enforcement.

   A welfare notice of action showing amounts received by the welfare agency for child support.

   A written statement from an attorney certifying that a collection or enforcement action has been filed.

Net Income from a Business

In order to verify the net income from a business, the PHA will view IRS and financial documents from prior years and use this information to anticipate the income for the next 12 months.

Acceptable methods of verification include:

1. IRS Form 1040, including:
   Schedule C (Small Business)
   Schedule E (Rental Property Income)
   Schedule F (Farm Income)

2. 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.

2. Audited or unaudited financial statement(s) of the business.

Child Care Business

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

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

If the family has filed a tax return, the family will be required to provide it.

Recurring Gifts

The family must furnish a self-certification which contains the following information:

The person who provides the gifts
The value of the gifts
The regularity (dates) of the gifts
The purpose of the gifts

Zero Income Status

Families that claim zero income will be required to attend an interview at the PHA every three

months and sign a new zero income statement. The PHA will run a computer match in EMS-CAP and through DOL at the same time.

Full-time Student Status

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

Financial aid, scholarships and grants are not counted towards family income.

Verification of full time student status includes:

1. Written verification from the registrar's office or other school official.

2. School records indicating enrollment for sufficient number of credits to be considered a full-time student by the educational institution.

F. INCOME FROM ASSETS [24 CFR 982.516]

Savings Account Interest Income and Dividends

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Account statements, passbooks, certificates of deposit, or PHA verification forms completed by the financial institution.

2. Broker's statements showing value of stocks or bonds and the earnings credited the family. Earnings can be obtained from current newspaper quotations or oral broker's verification.

3. IRS Form 1099 from the financial institution, provided that the PHA must adjust the information to project earnings expected for the next 12 months.

Interest Income from Mortgages or Similar Arrangements

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

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

2. Amortization schedule showing interest for the 12 months following the effective date of the certification or recertification.

Net Rental Income from Property Owned by Family

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. IRS Form 1040 with Schedule E (Rental Income).

2. Copies of latest rent receipts, leases, or other documentation of rent amounts.

3. Documentation of allowable operating expenses of the property: tax statements, insurance invoices, bills for reasonable maintenance and utilities, and bank statements or amortization schedules showing monthly interest expense.

4. Lessee's written statement verifying rent payments to the family and family's self-certification as to net income realized.

G. VERIFICATION OF ASSETS

Family Assets

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

1. Verification forms, letters, or documents from a financial institution or broker.

2. Passbooks, checking account statements, certificates of deposit, bonds, or financial statements completed by a financial institution or broker.

3. Quotes from a stock broker or realty agent as to net amount family would receive if they liquidated securities or real estate.

4. Real estate tax statements if the approximate current market value can be deduced from assessment.

5. Financial statements for business assets.

6. Copies of closing documents showing the selling price and the distribution of the sales proceeds.

7. Appraisals of personal property held as an investment.

8. Family's self-certification describing assets or cash held at the family's home or in safe deposit boxes.

The PHA will verify information on assets through the four methods of verification acceptable to

HUD in the following order:

1. third-party written
2. third-party oral
3. review of documents
4. certification/self-declaration

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

1. For all certifications and re-examinations, the PHA will obtain the family's certification as to whether any member has disposed of assets for less than fair market value during the two years preceding the effective date of the certification or re-examination.

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

Procedure if there is a service charge for obtaining third party verification

The PHA will determine that third-party verification is not available when there is a service charge for verifying an asset or expense *and* the family has original documents that prove the necessary information.

If the family cannot provide the documents, the PHA will pay the service charge required to obtain the third-party verification, unless it is not cost effective, in which case 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.

H. VERIFICATION OF ALLOWABLE DEDUCTIONS FROM INCOME

[24 CFR 982.516]

Child Care Expenses

1. Written verification from the person who receives the payments is required. If the child care provider is an individual, s/he must provide a statement of the amount they are charging the family for their services.

2. Verifications must specify the child care provider's name, address, telephone number, Social Security Number, the names of the children cared for, the number of hours the child care occurs, the rate of pay, and the typical yearly amount paid, including school and vacation periods.

3. Family's certification as to whether any of those payments have been or will be paid or reimbursed by outside sources.

4. Verification that childcare provider is licensed/registered or otherwise regulated must be obtained from provider, otherwise childcare situation will be treated as unregulated and eligible only for a maximum allowance of $89.00 per child, per week.

Medical Expenses

Families who claim medical expenses will be required to submit a certification as to whether or not any expense payments have been, or will be, reimbursed by an outside source. All expense claims will be verified by one or more of the methods listed below:

1. Written verification by a doctor, hospital or clinic personnel, dentist, pharmacist, of (a) the anticipated medical costs to be incurred by the family and regular payments due on medical bills; and (b) extent to which those expenses will be reimbursed by insurance or a government agency.

2. Written confirmation by the insurance company or employer of health insurance premiums to be paid by the family.

3. Written confirmation from the Social Security Administration of Medicare premiums to be paid by the family over the next 12 months. A computer printout will be accepted.

4. For attendant care:

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

    b. Attendant's written confirmation of hours of care provided and amount and frequency of payments received from the family or agency (or copies of canceled checks the family used to make those payments) or stubs from the agency providing the services.

5. Receipts, canceled checks, or pay stubs that verify medical costs and insurance expenses likely to be incurred in the next 12 months.

6. Copies of payment agreements or most recent invoice that verify payments made on outstanding medical bills that will continue over all or part of the next 12 months.

7. Receipts or other record of medical expenses incurred during the past 12 months that can be used to anticipate future medical expenses. PHA may use this approach for "general medical expenses" such as non-prescription drugs and regular visits to doctors or dentists, but not for one time, nonrecurring expenses from the previous year.

8. The PHA will use mileage at the IRS rate, or cab, bus fare, or other public transportation cost for verification of the cost of transportation directly related to medical treatment.

Assistance to Persons with Disabilities [24 CFR 5.611(c)]

1. In All Cases:

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

   (b) Family's certification as to whether they receive reimbursement for any of the expenses of disability assistance and the amount of any reimbursement received.

2. Attendant Care:

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

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

3. Auxiliary Apparatus:

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

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

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

Verification of Legal Identity

In order to prevent program abuse, the PHA will require applicants to furnish verification of legal identity for all family members.

The documents listed below will be considered acceptable verification of legal identity for adults. If a document submitted by a family is illegible or otherwise questionable, more than one of these documents may be required.

Certificate of Birth, naturalization papers
Church issued baptismal certificate
Current, valid Driver's license
U.S. military discharge (DD 214)
U.S. passport
Voter's registration
Company/agency Identification Card
State or Federal government issued identification card
DSS Eligibility Management System (EMS) print-out

Documents considered acceptable for the verification of legal identity for minors may be one or more of the following:

Certificate of Birth
Adoption papers
Custody agreement
Health and Human Services ID
School records

Verification of Marital Status

[INSTRUCTION: This would be used to determine spouse for income and deduction and noncitizen purposes]

Verification of divorce status will be a certified copy of the divorce decree, signed by a Court Officer.

Verification of a separation may be a copy of court-ordered maintenance or other records.

Verification of marriage status is a marriage certificate.

Familial Relationships

Certification will normally be considered sufficient verification of family relationships. In cases

where reasonable doubt exists, the family may be asked to provide verification.

The following verifications will always be required if applicable:

Verification of relationship:

Official identification showing names
Birth Certificates
Baptismal certificates

Verification of guardianship is:

Court-ordered assignment
Verification from social services agency
School records

Verification of Permanent Absence of Family Member If an adult member who was formerly a member of the household is reported permanently absent by the family, the PHA will consider any of the following as verification:

1. Husband or wife institutes divorce action.

2. Husband or wife institutes legal separation.

3. Order of protection/restraining order obtained by one family member against another.

4. Proof of another home address, such as utility bills, canceled checks for rent, drivers license, or lease or rental agreement, if available.

5. Statements from other agencies such as social services or a written statement from the landlord or manager that the adult family member is no longer living at that location.

6. If no other proof can be provided, the PHA will accept a self-certification from the head of household or the spouse or co-head, if the head is the absent member.

7. If the adult family member is incarcerated, a document from the Court or prison should be obtained stating how long they will be incarcerated.

Verification of Change in Family Composition

The PHA may verify changes in family composition either reported or unreported through letters, telephone calls, utility records, inspections, landlords, neighbors, credit data, school or DMV records, and other sources.

Verification of Disability

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

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

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

(a) Citizens or Nationals of the United States are required to sign a declaration under penalty of perjury. The PHA will require citizens to provide documentation of citizenship. Acceptable documentation will include at least one of the following original documents:

United States Birth Certificate
United States passport
Resident alien/registration card
Social Security card

(b) Eligible Immigrants aged 62 and over are required to sign a declaration of eligible immigration status and provide proof of age.

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

(d) Ineligible family members who do not claim to be citizens or eligible immigrants must be listed on a statement of ineligible family members signed by the head of household or spouse.

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

Failure to Provide. If an applicant or participant family member fails to sign required declarations and consent forms or provide documents, as required, they must be listed as an ineligible member. If the entire family fails to provide and sign as required, the family may be denied or terminated for failure to provide required information.

Time of Verification

For applicants, verification of U.S. citizenship/eligible immigrant status occurs at the same time as verification of other factors of eligibility for final eligibility determination/at the time of initial application.

For participants, it is done at the first regular recertification after June 19, 1995. For family members added after other members have been verified, the verification occurs at the first recertification after the new member moves in.

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

Extensions of Time to Provide Documents

The PHA will grant an extension of 15 days for families to submit evidence of eligible immigrant status.

Acceptable Documents of Eligible Immigration

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

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

A birth certificate is not acceptable verification of status. All documents in connection with U.S. citizenship/eligible immigrant status must be kept five years.
The PHA will verify the eligibility of a family member at any time such eligibility is in question, without regard to the position of the family on the waiting list.

If the PHA determines that a family member has knowingly permitted another individual who is

not eligible for assistance to reside permanently in the family's unit, the family's assistance will be terminated for 36 months, unless the ineligible individual has already been considered in prorating the family's assistance.

Verification of Social Security Numbers [24 CFR 5.216]

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

- A driver's license
- Identification card issued by a Federal, State or local agency
- Identification card issued by a medical insurance company or provider (including Medicare and Medicaid)
- An identification card issued by an employer or trade union
- An identification card issued by a medical insurance company
- Earnings statements or payroll stubs
- Bank Statements
- IRS Form 1099
- Benefit award letters from government agencies
- Retirement benefit letter
- Life insurance policies
- Court records such as real estate, tax notices, marriage and divorce, judgment or bankruptcy records
- Verification of benefits or Social Security Number from Social Security Administration
- EMS print-out

New family members ages six and older will be required to produce their Social Security Card or provide the substitute documentation described above together with their certification that the substitute information provided is complete and accurate. This information is to be provided at the time the change in family composition is reported to the PHA.

If an applicant or participant is able to disclose the Social Security Number but cannot meet the documentation requirements, the applicant or participant must show proof they have applied to Social Security for a replacement card. The applicant/participant or family member will have an additional 30 days to provide proof of the Social Security Number. If they fail to provide this documentation, the family's assistance will be terminated.

In the case of an individual at least 62 years of age, the PHA may grant an extension for an additional 60 days to a total of 120 days. If, at the end of this time, the elderly individual has not provided documentation, the family's assistance will be terminated.

If the family member states they have not been issued a number, the family member will be required to show they have applied for a Social Security Number.

Chapter 8

VOUCHER ISSUANCE AND BRIEFINGS
[24 CFR 982.301, 982.302]

INTRODUCTION

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

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

When funding is available, the PHA will issue vouchers to applicants whose eligibility has been determined. The issuance of vouchers must be within the dollar limitations set by the ACC budget.

The number of vouchers issued must ensure that the PHA stays as close as possible to one hundred per cent (100%) lease-up. The PHA performs a monthly calculation to determine whether applications can be processed, the number of vouchers that can be issued, and to what extent the PHA can over-issue vouchers (i.e., issue more vouchers than the budget allows).

The PHA may over-issue vouchers only to the extent necessary to meet its leasing goals. All vouchers which are over-issued must be honored. If the PHA finds it is over-leased, it must adjust its future issuance of vouchers in order not to exceed the ACC budget limitations over the fiscal year.

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

Initial Applicant Briefing

A full HUD-required briefing will be conducted for applicant families who are determined to be eligible for assistance. The briefings will be conducted in group and/or individual meetings. Families which attend group briefings and still have the need for individual assistance will be referred to a housing coordinator. Individual briefings will be conducted for Family Unification Program (FUP) participants so that they may better understand the family obligations specific to this program as they relate to DCF and the PHA. Briefings will be conducted in English and, when necessary, in Spanish.

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

Separate briefing sessions may be held for applicants who are eligible to participate in the Family Unification Program and Mainstream Housing Opportunities for Persons With Disabilities Program. Applicants will be informed of the requirements and family obligations specific to the Family Unification Program and the Mainstream Housing Opportunities for Persons With Disabilities Program. Briefings must be scheduled to accommodate applicants' employment schedules.

The PHA will not issue a voucher to a family unless the household representative has attended a briefing and signed the voucher. Applicants who provide prior notice of inability to attend a briefing will automatically be scheduled for the next briefing. Applicants who fail to attend two (2) scheduled briefings without prior notification and approval of the PHA may be denied admission based on failure to supply information needed for certification. The PHA will conduct individual briefings for families with disabilities at their homes, upon request by the family, if this is required as a reasonable accommodation.

All clients who have been properly briefed will sign an acknowledgement indicating that they are aware of their mobility rights. They will indicate the communities (if any) to which they are interested in moving. The acknowledgement will be written in English and Spanish.

Briefing Packet [24 CFR 982.301(b)]

The documents and information provided in the briefing packet for the voucher programs will comply with all HUD requirements. The PHA also includes other information and materials which are not required by HUD.

The family is provided with the following information and materials:

1. The voucher, with the term of the voucher indicated, and the PHA policy for requesting extensions to the term of the voucher.

2. A description of the method used to calculate the housing assistance payment (HAP) for a family, information on the utility allowance, and the payment standards for the voucher program.

3. How the maximum allowable rent (MAR) is determined, including an explanation of rent reasonableness.

4. Guidance and factors to consider which assist the family in selecting a unit, such as proximity to employment, public transportation (bus map for the region including current schedules), schools, day care, shopping, and the accessibility of services including social services. Guidance will also be provided to assist the family in evaluating prospective units, such as the condition of a unit, whether the rent is reasonable, the cost of tenant-paid utilities, and energy efficiency of the unit.

5. An explanation of the geographical area in which the family may lease a unit, including an explanation of portability. The applicant will indicate the towns in which he or she is interested in living on a mobility notification form. The applicant will sign this form and receive a copy.

6. The Request for Tenancy Approval and a description of the procedure for requesting approval of a rental dwelling unit.

7. The PHA policy on providing information about families to prospective owners.

8. The subsidy standards, including when and how exceptions are made and how the voucher size relates to the unit size selected.

9. The HUD brochure on how to select a unit and/or the HUD brochure "A Good Place to Live," concerning how to select a unit that complies with HQS.

10. The HUD pamphlet on lead-based paint entitled "Protect Your Family From Lead in Your Home" and information about where blood level testing is available.

11. Information on federal, state and local equal opportunity laws, a list of Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) offices, and brochures from the Connecticut Fair Housing Center and Statewide Legal Referral Services. The PHA will also include the pamphlet "Fair Housing: It's Your Right" and information such as the "take one, take all" law and the phone number of the local HUD enforcement office.

13. A list of landlords or other parties who may have suitable rental units available.

14. If the family includes a person with disabilities, notice that the PHA will assist in locating accessible units and a list of available accessible units known to the PHA.

15. The family obligations under the program.

16. The grounds on which the PHA may terminate assistance for a participant family because of family action or failure to act.

17. PHA informal hearing procedures, including when the PHA is required to offer a participant family the opportunity for an informal hearing, and how to request the hearing.

18. An owner's handbook, an HQS checklist and a sample HAP contract.

19. Procedures for notifying the PHA and/or HUD of program abuses such as side payments, extra charges, violations of tenant rights, and owner failure to repair.

20. The family's rights as a tenant and as a program participant.

21. Requirements for reporting changes occurring between certifications.

22. Information on security deposits.

23. A map showing areas representing various income levels for the jurisdiction and surrounding areas for the purpose of expanding housing opportunities for families.

24. The Publication *Things You Should Know (HUD –1140- OIG)* that explains types of actions a family must avoid and the penalties for program abuse.
25. Information concerning Reasonable Accommodation and how to make application if necessary

Other Information to be Provided at the Briefing [24 CFR 982.301(a)]

The person conducting the briefing will also describe how the program works and the relationship between the family and the owner, the family and the PHA, and the PHA and the owner.

The briefing presentation emphasizes:

- Family and owner responsibilities.

- The role of DSS in monitoring the program (which may include an HQS inspection by DSS staff).

- How portability works for families eligible to exercise portability.

- Advantages in moving to an area with a low concentration of poor families if the family is living in a high poverty census tract in the PHA's jurisdiction.

- Exercising choice in residency.

- Choosing a unit carefully and only after due consideration.

- The Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program and its advantages.

- Mobility services.

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

C. ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION IN AREAS WITHOUT LOW INCOME OR MINORITY CONCENTRATION [SEMAP Indicator]

At the briefing, families are encouraged to search for housing in non-impacted areas, and the PHA will provide assistance to families who wish to do so. The PHA will have available, through subscription or by other means (including the internet), copies of area newspapers. The PHA will also maintain a town-by-town directory of suburban landlords, compile a weekly list of rental openings in each town, and conduct regular canvassing by phone of rental agencies and suburban landlords in order to identify and maintain a list of viable suburban rental units for families seeking housing.

The mobility services provided may include:

- Direct contact with landlords.
- Counseling with the family.
- Providing information about services in various non-impacted areas.
- Meeting with neighborhood groups to promote understanding.
- Formal or informal discussions with landlord groups
- Formal or informal discussions with social service agencies
- Meeting with rental referral companies or agencies
- Meeting with fair housing groups or agencies

D. ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES WHO CLAIM DISCRIMINATION

The PHA will give participants a copy of HUD form 903 to use in the event that they decide to file a complaint. When housing discrimination is alleged, PHA staff will help clients who require assistance in filling out discrimination complaint forms by referring them to the appropriate legal authority or legal services representative.

Each administering agency should establish procedures for tracking reports of housing discrimination. Logs of all reported instances of housing discrimination will be maintained and forwarded to the Connecticut Fair Housing Center on a quarterly basis.

E. SECURITY DEPOSIT REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 982.313]

Security deposits charged by owners may not exceed those charged to unassisted tenants (nor the maximum prescribed by state law, i.e., two months rent, or one months rent if the tenant is 62 or older).

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

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

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

Expirations

The voucher is valid for a period of at least **(90) ninety** calendar days from the date of issuance. The family must submit a Request for Tenancy Approval within the ninety-day period, unless an extension has been granted by the PHA, or the voucher will expire (i.e., the family will lose the voucher).

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

Suspensions

When a Request for Tenancy Approval is received, the PHA will suspend or stop the clock on the term of the voucher and will not deduct the number of days required to process the request.

Extensions

The PHA will extend the term of the voucher up to 180 days from the beginning of the initial term. If the family needs and request an extension, and it is granted, it will be granted in thirty-day increments not to exceed **three** extensions. Approval of each extension should be granted by a housing supervisor.

Extensions are granted at the discretion of the PHA primarily for the following reasons:

The PHA is satisfied that the family has made a reasonable effort to locate a unit, including seeking the assistance of the PHA through its mobility services, throughout the initial **ninety-day** period. A completed search record is required.

The family was prevented from finding a unit due to the disability accessibility requirement of a family member.

Special Extensions

Special extensions beyond the 180 day maximum search time may be granted by the PHA, but only in cases where there are circumstances documented and verified that are beyond the family's control and that affect the family's ability to find suitable housing within the initial 90 days and subsequent allowable extensions.

The housing supervisor must review the family's search record and all documentation provided by the family to verify and support the request. The housing supervisor shall approve or disapprove the special extension. If the family does not provide proper documentation, a special extension will not be granted.

Assistance to Voucher Holders

Families who require additional assistance during their search may call the PHA office to request assistance. Voucher holders will be notified at their briefing session that the PHA periodically updates the listing of available units and shall be told how the updated list may be obtained.

The PHA will assist families with negotiations with owners and provide other assistance related to the families' search for housing.

G. VOUCHER ISSUANCE DETERMINATION FOR SPLIT HOUSEHOLDS [24 CFR 982.315]

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

1. Which of the two new family units has custody of dependent children.

2. Which family member was the head of household when the voucher was initially issued (listed on the initial application).

3. The composition of the new family units, and which unit contains elderly or disabled members.

4. Whether domestic violence was involved in the breakup.

5. Which family members remain in the unit.

6. Recommendations of social service professionals.

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

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

H. REMAINING MEMBER OF TENANT FAMILY - RETENTION OF VOUCHER [24 CFR 982.315]

To be considered the remaining member of the tenant family, the person must have received previous written approval by the PHA and the landlord to be living in the unit.

A live-in attendant, by definition, is not a member of the family and will not be considered a remaining member of the family.

In order for a minor child to continue to receive assistance as a remaining family member:

1. The court must have awarded emancipated minor status to the minor, or

2. The PHA must have verified that the social services agency and/or the Juvenile Court has arranged for another adult to be brought into the assisted unit to care for the child(ren) for

an indefinite period.

A reduction in family size may require a reduction in the voucher size.

Chapter 9

REQUEST FOR TENANCY APPROVAL AND CONTRACT EXECUTION
[24 CFR 982.302]

INTRODUCTION [24 CFR 982.305(a)]

The PHA's program operations are designed to utilize available resources in a manner that is efficient and provides eligible families with timely assistance based on the number of units that have been budgeted. The PHA's objectives include maximizing the use of HUD funds by providing assistance to as many eligible families and for as many eligible units as the budget will allow.

After families are issued a voucher, they may search for a unit anywhere within the jurisdiction of the PHA, or outside of the PHA's jurisdiction if they qualify for portability. The family must find an eligible unit under the program rules, with an owner/landlord who is willing to enter into a housing assistance payment (HAP) contract with the PHA. This chapter defines the types of eligible housing, the PHA's policies which pertain to initial inspections, lease requirements, owner disapproval, and the processing of requests for tenancy approval.

A. REQUEST FOR TENANACY APPROVAL [24 CFR 982.302, 982.305(b)]

The request for tenancy approval (RTA) and a copy of the proposed lease, including the HUD-prescribed tenancy addendum, must be submitted by the family during the term of the voucher. The family must submit the request for tenancy approval in the form and manner required by the PHA.

The request for tenancy approval must be signed by both the owner and voucher-holder.

The PHA will not permit the family to submit more than one RTA at a time.

The PHA will review the proposed lease and the RTA to determine whether or not they are approvable. The RTA will be approved if:

1. The unit is an eligible type of housing.

2. The unit meets HUD's Housing Quality Standards (and any additional criteria as identified in this administrative plan).

3. The rent is reasonable.

4. The security deposit is approvable in accordance with any limitations in this plan.

5. The proposed lease complies with HUD and PHA requirements (see "Lease Review" section below).

6. The owner is approvable, and there are no conflicts of interest (see "Owner Disapproval" section below).

In addition to the above, at the time a family initially receives assistance in a particular rental unit (i.e., new admissions and moves), if the gross rent for the unit exceeds the applicable payment standard for the family, the family share of the rent may not exceed 40 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income (see Chapter 11 of this administrative plan, "Owner Rents, Rent Reasonableness and Payment Standards").

Disapproval of Request for Tenancy Approval

If the PHA determines that the request cannot be approved for any reason, the landlord and the family will be notified in writing. The PHA will instruct the owner and family of the steps that are necessary to approve the request.

The owner will be given no more than 15 calendar days to submit an approvable RTA from the date of disapproval.

When, for any reason, an RTA is not approved, the PHA will furnish another RTA form to the family along with the notice of disapproval so that the family can continue to search for eligible housing.

B. ELIGIBLE TYPES OF HOUSING [24 CFR 982.353]

The PHA will approve any of the following types of housing in the voucher program:

- All approved structure types can be utilized.

- Manufactured homes where the tenant leases the mobile home and the pad.

-Manufactured homes where the tenant owns the mobile home and leases the pad.

A family can own a rental unit but cannot reside in it while being assisted, except in the case when the tenant owns the mobile home and leases the pad.

The PHA may not permit a voucher holder to lease a unit which is receiving project-based Section 8 assistance or any other duplicative rental subsidy subsidies.

C. LEASE REVIEW [24 CFR 982.308]

The PHA will review the lease, particularly noting *whether any optional charges are approvable,* and whether it is in compliance with regulations and state/local law. The tenant also must have legal capacity to enter into a lease under state and local law. Responsibility for utilities, appliances and optional services must correspond to those provided on the request for tenancy approval.

The terms and conditions of the landlord's lease must be consistent with state and local law.

The lease must specify:

The names of the owner and all tenants, and

The address of the unit rented (including apartment number, if any), and

The amount of the monthly rent to owner, and

The utilities and appliances to be supplied by the owner, and

The utilities and appliances to be supplied by the family.

The HUD-prescribed tenancy addendum must be included in the lease word-for-word before the lease is executed.

Effective September 15, 2000, the owner's lease must include the lead warning statement and disclosure information required by 24 CFR 35.92(b).

The lease must provide that drug-related criminal activity engaged in by the tenant, any household member, or any guest on or near the premises, or any person under the tenant's control on the premises is grounds to terminate tenancy.

The lease must also provide that owner may evict family when the owner determines that:

Any household member is illegally using a drug; or

A pattern of illegal use of drug by any household member exists which interferes with the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents. The lease must also provide that the following types of criminal activity by a "covered person" are grounds to terminate tenancy:

Any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents (including property management staff residing on the premises);

Any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of their residences by persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises; or

Any violent criminal activity on or near the premises by a tenant, household member, or

guest; or

Any violent criminal activity on the premises by any other person under the tenant's control.

The lease must provide that the owner may terminate tenancy if a tenant is:

Fleeing to avoid prosecution or custody or confinement after conviction for a crime, or attempt to commit a crime, that is a felony under the laws of the place from which the individual flees; or

Violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under federal or state law.

House rules of the owner may be attached to the lease as an addendum, provided they are approved by the PHA to ensure they do not violate any fair housing provisions and do not conflict with the lease addendum.

Actions Before Lease Term

All of the following must be completed before the beginning of the initial term of the lease for a unit:

The PHA has inspected the unit and has determined that the unit satisfies the HQS;

The landlord and tenant have executed the lease; and

The PHA has approved leasing of the unit in accordance with program requirements.

D. SEPARATE AGREEMENTS

Separate agreements are not necessarily illegal side agreements. Families and owners will be advised of the prohibition of illegal side payments for additional rent, or for items normally included in the rent of unassisted families, or for items not shown on the approved lease.

The family is not liable under the lease for unpaid charges for items covered by separate agreements and nonpayment of these agreements cannot be cause for eviction.

Owners and families may execute separate agreements for services, appliances (other than range and refrigerator) and other items that are not included in the lease if the agreement is in writing and approved by the PHA.

Any appliances, services or other items which are routinely provided to unassisted families as part of the lease (such as air conditioning, dishwasher or garage) or are permanently installed in the unit, cannot be put under separate agreement and must be included in the lease. For there to be a separate agreement, the family must have the option of not utilizing the service, appliance or other item.

If the family and owner have come to a written agreement on the amount of allowable charges for a specific item, so long as those charges are reasonable and not a substitute for higher rent, they will be allowed.

All agreements for special items or services must be attached to the lease approved by the PHA. If agreements are entered into at a later date, they must be approved by the PHA and attached to the lease.

E. INITIAL INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.305(a) & (b)]

See Chapter 10 of this administrative plan, "Housing Quality Standards and Inspections."

F. RENT LIMITATIONS [24 CFR 982.507]

The PHA will make a determination as to the reasonableness of the proposed rent in relation to comparable units available for lease on the private unassisted market, and the rent charged by the owner for a comparable unassisted unit in the building or premises.

By accepting each monthly housing assistance payment from the PHA, the owner certifies that the rent to owner is not more than rent charged by the owner for comparable unassisted units in the premises. The owner is required to provide the PHA with information requested on rents charged by the owner on the premises or elsewhere.

At all times during tenancy, the rent to owner may not be more than the most current reasonable rent as determined by the PHA.

G. DISAPPROVAL OF PROPOSED RENT [24 CFR 982.502]

In any of the programs, if the proposed gross rent is not reasonable, at the family's request, the PHA will negotiate with the owner to reduce the rent to a reasonable rent. If the rent is not affordable because the family share would be more than 40% of the family's monthly adjusted income, the PHA will negotiate with the owner to reduce the rent to an affordable rent for the family.

> At the family's request, the PHA will negotiate with the owner to reduce the rent or include some or all of the utilities in the rent to owner.

If the rent can be approved by negotiations with the owner, the PHA will continue processing the request for tenancy approval and lease. If the revised rent involves a change in the provision of utilities, a new request for tenancy approval must be submitted by the owner.

If the owner does not agree on the rent to owner after the PHA has tried and failed to negotiate a revised rent, the PHA will inform the family and owner that the lease/tenancy is disapproved.

H. INFORMATION TO OWNERS [24 CFR 982.307(b), 982.54(d)(7)]

In accordance with HUD requirements, the PHA will furnish prospective owners with the family's current address as shown in the PHA's records and, if known to the PHA, the name and address of the landlord at the family's current and prior address.

The PHA will make an exception to this requirement if the family's whereabouts must be protected due to domestic abuse or witness protection.

The PHA will inform owners that it is the responsibility of the landlord to determine the suitability of prospective tenants. Owners will be encouraged to screen applicants for rent payment history, eviction history, damage to units, and other factors related to the family's suitability as a tenant.

A statement of the PHA's policy on release of information to prospective landlords will be included in the briefing packet which is provided to the family.

The PHA will provide documented information regarding the family's tenancy history for the past two (2) years, if available, to prospective landlords upon written request from the landlord.

The PHA will provide the following information based on documentation in its possession:

Eviction history (documenting the disposition of the eviction).

Damage to rental units, including independent verification.

The information will be provided for the past two (2) years.

The information will be provided in writing.

Only the housing supervisor may provide this information. The PHA's policy on providing information to owners is included in the briefing packet and will apply uniformly to all families and owners.

I. OWNER DISAPPROVAL [24 CFR 982.306]

See Chapter 16 of this administrative plan, "Owner Disapproval and Restriction."

J. CHANGE IN TOTAL TENANT PAYMENT (TTP) PRIOR TO HAP EFFECTIVE DATE

When the family reports changes in factors that will affect the total tenant payment (TTP) prior to the effective date of the HAP contract at admission, the information will be verified and the TTP will be re-calculated. If the family does not report any change, the PHA need not obtain new verifications before signing the HAP contract, unless verifications are more than 60 days old.

K. CONTRACT EXECUTION PROCESS [24 CFR 982.305(c)]

The PHA prepares the housing assistance payment (HAP) contract and lease for execution. The family and the owner will execute the lease, and the owner and the PHA will execute the HAP contract. Copies of these documents will be furnished to the parties who signed the respective documents. The PHA will retain a copy of all signed documents.

The PHA will make every effort to execute the HAP contract before the commencement of the lease term. The HAP contract may not be executed more than 60 days after commencement of the lease term and no payments will be made until the contract is executed.

The following PHA representatives are authorized to execute a contract on behalf of the PHA: the executive director or his or her designee.

Owners must provide the current street address of their residence (not a post office box). If families lease properties owned by relatives, the owner's current address will be compared to the address of the subsidized unit.

An owner must provide his or her social security number.

The owner must provide a business or home telephone number.

Unless their lease was effective prior to June 17, 1998, a family may not lease a property owned by a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother of any family member. The PHA will waive this restriction as a reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with a disablility.

L. PROOF OF OWNERSHIP

Owners must also submit proof of ownership of the property, such as a property deed, tax bill, online printout from city/town assessor's office or a mortgage statement (include the volume and page number from the most recent transaction in the municipal land records), and a copy of the management agreement if the property is managed by a management agent.

M. CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP

See Chapter 16 of this administrative plan, "Owner Disapproval and Restriction."

Chapter 10

HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS AND INSPECTIONS
[24 CFR 982.401]

INTRODUCTION

Housing Quality Standards (HQS) are the HUD-required minimum standards of quality for tenant-based programs. Rental units must meet HQS both at initial occupancy and during the term of the lease. HQS apply to the building and premises, as well as to the unit. All units must pass the HQS inspection on or before the beginning date of the assisted lease and HAP contract.

The PHA will inspect each unit under contract at least annually. The PHA will also have an inspection supervisor perform quality control inspections on the number of files required for file sampling by SEMAP annually to maintain the PHA's required standards and to assure consistency in the PHA's program. This chapter describes the PHA's procedures for performing HQS inspections, and PHA standards for the timeliness of repairs. It also explains the responsibilities of the owner and the family, and the consequences of noncompliance with HQS requirements for both families and owners. The use of the term "HQS" in this administrative plan refers to the combination of both HUD and PHA requirements.

A. GUIDELINES/TYPES OF INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.401(a), 982.405]

Efforts will be made at all times to encourage owners to provide housing above HQS minimum standards.

All utilities must be in service prior to the effective date of the HAP contract. If the utilities are not in service at the time of inspection, the HQS inspector will notify the owner or the tenant (whomever is responsible for the utilities, according to the RTA) to have the utilities turned on. The inspector will either schedule and conduct a re-inspection, or the owner and the tenant shall both certify that the utilities are in service.

If the tenant is responsible for supplying the stove and/or the refrigerator, the PHA will allow the stove and/or the refrigerator to be placed in the unit after the inspection if, after the unit has passed all other HQS, the owner and the tenant certify that the appliances are in the unit and working according to HQS. The PHA will not conduct a re-inspection in that event.

There are four types of inspections the PHA will perform:

1. Initial/Move-in: Conducted when the Request For Tenancy Approval has been received and accepted. Inspection must not be over 30 days old.

2. Annual: Must be conducted prior to the HAP contract anniversary date.

3. Special/Complaint: At request of owner, family or an agency or third party.

4. Quality Control: to maintain quality standards within the program.

B. INITIAL HQS INSPECTION [24 CFR 982.401(a), 982.305(b)(2)]

Timely Initial HQS Inspection

The PHA will inspect the unit, determine whether the unit satisfies HQS, and notify the owner and the tenant of the determination within a reasonable amount of time.

The PHA will conduct initial HQS inspections for the owner and the tenant within 10 days of receipt of the RTA.

The initial inspection will be conducted to:

- Determine if the unit and property meet the HQS defined in this plan.

- Document the current condition of the unit in order to assist in future evaluations of whether the condition of the unit exceeds normal wear and tear.

- Document the information to be used for determination of rent-reasonableness.

If the unit fails the initial HQS inspection, the owner and the tenant will be advised to notify the PHA once repairs are completed.

A notice will be forwarded to the landlord listing the failures and a copy of that notice will be forwarded to the tenant.

On an initial inspection, the owner will be given up to 30 days to correct the items noted as failing HQS unless, at the inspector's discretion and depending on the amount and complexity of work to be done, additional time will be given.

The owner will be allowed up to two re-inspections for repair work to be completed. The PHA may choose to afford the landlord additional opportunities to comply based on mitigating circumstances.

If unit fails an initial inspection due to deteriorated paint surfaces, the tenant will not be allowed to move in until corrective action has been taken and the apartment has passed inspection.

If the time period given by the inspector to correct the repairs has elapsed, or if the maximum number of failed re-inspections has occurred, the tenant must select another unit.

C. ANNUAL HQS INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.405(a)]

The PHA conducts an inspection in accordance with HQS annually, at least 30 days prior to the anniversary date of the HAP contract. Special inspections may be scheduled between anniversary dates.

HQS deficiencies which cause a unit to fail must be corrected by the landlord unless it is a failure for which the tenant is responsible.

The tenant must allow the PHA to inspect the unit at reasonable times with reasonable notice. [24 CFR 982.551 (d)]

The PHA will work with the tenant to accommodate the tenant's schedule.

The PHA will notify the tenant in writing at least 5 days prior to the inspection.

Inspection: The tenant is notified of the date and time of the inspection appointment by mail. If the tenant is unable to be present, he or she must reschedule the appointment so that the inspection is completed within 7 days.

In the case of a no entry the inspection company will reschedule the next inspection within fourteen (14) days of that event.

If the tenant does not contact the PHA to reschedule the inspection, or if the tenant misses two (2) inspection appointments without good cause such as emergency, illness or disability, the PHA will consider the tenant to have violated a family obligation and his or her assistance will be terminated in accordance with the termination procedures in the administrative plan. The PHA may choose to afford the tenant additional opportunities to comply based on mitigating circumstances.

Time Standards for Repairs

1. Emergency items which endanger the family's health or safety must be corrected by the owner or tenant within 24 hours of notification.

2. For non-emergency items, repairs must be made within 30 days.

3. For major repairs, the director may approve an extension beyond 30 days.

Rent Increases

Increases in the rent paid to the owner may not be approved if the unit is in a failed condition.

D. SPECIAL/COMPLAINT INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.405(c)]

If at any time the family or owner notifies the PHA that the unit does not meet HQS, the PHA will conduct an inspection.

The PHA may also conduct a special inspection based on information from third parties such as neighbors or public officials.

The PHA will inspect only the items which were reported, but if the inspector notices additional deficiencies that would cause the unit to fail HQS, the responsible party will be required to make the necessary repairs.

If the anniversary date is within 120 days of a special inspection, the special inspection will be categorized as annual and all annual procedures will be followed.

E. QUALITY CONTROL INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.405(b)]

Quality control inspections will be performed by the supervisor on the number of files required by SEMAP. The purpose of quality control inspections is to ascertain that each inspector is conducting accurate and complete inspections, and to ensure that there is consistency among inspectors in the application of the HQS.

The sampling of files chosen for quality control will include recently completed inspections (conducted within the prior three months), a cross-section of neighborhoods, and a cross-section of inspectors.

F. ACCEPTABILITY CRITERIA AND EXCEPTIONS TO HQS [24 CFR 982.401 (a)]

The PHA adheres to the acceptability criteria in the program regulations and HUD inspection booklet with the additions described below:

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.

Owners are responsible for providing batteries and for replacing (old) non-functioning batteries for battery- powered (units) smoke detectors or fire detectors. Tenants will be instructed not to tamper with smoke detectors or remove batteries under penalty of law (Sec.53a-117a. of the Connecticut General Statutes, Criminal Mischief in the fourth degree, a Class C misdemeanor).

Smoke detectors or fire detectors are required in attics or crawl spaces if heating or cooling equipment is located in the attic or crawl space.

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI) are required for all electrical receptacles located within six feet of a water source in the kitchen or bathroom. (with the exception of electrical outlets located on medicine cabinets)

Bedrooms:

- Bedrooms must be at least seventy (70) square feet in size.
- Bedrooms in basements or attics are not allowed unless they meet local code requirements. Bedrooms must have adequate ventilation and emergency exit capability.

Modifications.

Modifications or adaptations made to a unit (due) to accommodate a person with a disability must meet all applicable HQS and building codes.

Admittance to Basement:

Owners are required to allow the inspector access to the basement to inspect the heating system. If the owner does not allow access, he or she may instead present a safety inspection certificate from a local public agency or evidence that the heating equipment was recently serviced and is in good working order. The evidence of recent inspection or service must not be over one year old.

G EMERGENCY REPAIR ITEMS [24 CFR 982.404(a)]

The following items are considered to be of an emergency nature and must be corrected by the owner or tenant (whoever is responsible) within 24 hours of notice by the inspector:

- Lack of security for the unit
- Waterlogged ceiling in imminent danger of falling
- Major plumbing leaks or flooding
- Natural gas leak or fumes
- Electrical problem which could result in shock or fire
- No heat between November 1st and April 15th
- Lack of functioning toilet
- Non-operational smoke detector

Failures will be identified at the inspection if the landlord is present, or the landlord will be notified by fax, email or phone where possible. A letter marked urgent with an attachment listing unit failures will also be sent to the landlord.

1. The attachment will identify whether the failure is a 24 hour emergency repair item or a 30 day repair item.
2. The letter will inform landlords that items marked "24 hour emergency repair" must be addressed immediately and the landlord must fax or call the inspection firm within 24 hours verifying the repair has been completed.
3. The PHA will re-inspect the unit within 10 days after notification by the landlord if only 24 hour repairs were required.
4. If other non-emergency repairs were also required the PHA will re-inspect when the landlord indicates the remaining repairs have been completed.

The PHA may give a short extension (not more than 48 additional hours) whenever the responsible party cannot be notified or if it is impossible to effect the repair within the 24-hour period.

In those cases where there is leaking gas or potential of fire or some other threat to public safety, and the responsible party cannot be notified or it is impossible to make the repair, the PHA will notify the proper authorities.

If the emergency repair item(s) is not corrected in the time period required by the PHA, and the owner is responsible, the housing assistance payment will be abated.

If the emergency repair item(s) is not corrected in the time period required by the PHA, and it is an HQS violation caused by a breach of a family obligation, the PHA will terminate the assistance to the family.

H. CONSEQUENCES IF OWNER IS RESPONSIBLE (NON-EMERGENCY ITEMS)

[24 CFR 982.405, 982.453]

When it has been determined that a unit on the program fails to meet Housing Quality Standards, and the owner is responsible for completing the necessary repair(s), he or she will be notified in writing of the HQS violation(s). If the owner does not make the corrections in the time period specified by the PHA, the assistance payment to the owner will be abated.

Suspension of Housing Assistance Payments

A notice of suspension will be sent to the owner, and abatement will be effective as of the first of the following month.

The PHA will inspect units under suspension within 5 days of the owner's notification that the work has been completed.

If the owner makes repairs during the abatement period, payment will resume on the day the unit passes inspection. This pro-rated portion of the HAP will be included with the next month's payment.

The family will be notified of the re-inspection date.

No retroactive payments will be made to the owner for the period of time during which the rent was abated and the unit did not comply with HQS. The notice of suspension will state that the tenant is not responsible for the PHA's portion of the rent that is abated.

Extension of Time to Complete Repairs

The PHA will grant an extension in lieu of abatement in the following cases:

The owner has a good history of HQS compliance.

There is an unavoidable delay in completing repairs due to difficulties in obtaining parts or contracting for services.

The repairs are expensive (such as exterior painting or roof repair) and the owner needs time to obtain the funds.

The repairs must be delayed due to climate conditions.

The extension will be made for a period to be determined by the PHA. At the end of that time, if the work is not completed, the PHA will begin the abatement.

Termination of Contract

If the owner is responsible for repairs, and fails to correct all the deficiencies cited prior to the end of the suspension period, the owner will be sent a HAP Contract Proposed Termination Notice. Prior to the effective date of the termination, the suspension will remain in effect.

If repairs are completed before the effective termination date, the termination will be rescinded by the PHA if the tenant chooses to remain in the unit. Only one Housing Quality Standards inspection will be conducted after the termination notice is issued.

I. DETERMINATION OF RESPONSIBILITY [24 CFR 982.404

Certain HQS deficiencies are considered the responsibility of the family:

- Utilities paid by the tenant which are not in service.

- Failure to provide or maintain family-supplied appliances.

- Damage to the unit or premises caused by a household member or guest beyond normal wear and tear. "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.

The owner is responsible for all other HQS violations.

The owner is responsible for vermin infestation even if caused by the family's living habits. However, if such infestation is serious and repeated, it may be considered a lease violation and

the owner may evict for serious or repeated violation of the lease. The PHA may terminate the family's assistance on that basis.

If the family is responsible but the owner carries out the repairs, the owner will be encouraged to bill the family for the cost of the repairs, and the issue will be noted in the family's file.

J. CONSEQUENCES IF FAMILY IS RESPONSIBLE [24 CFR 982.404(b)]

If emergency or non-emergency violations of HQS are determined to be the responsibility of the family, the PHA will require the family make any repair(s) or corrections within 30 days of notice for non- emergency violations and within 24 hours of notice for emergency violations. If the repair(s) or correction(s) is not made in this time period, the PHA will terminate assistance to the family. Extensions of the time limits in these cases must be approved by a supervisor. The owner's rent will not be abated for items which are the family's responsibility.

If the tenant is responsible and corrections are not made, the HAP Contract will terminate when assistance is terminated. The landlord will be notified 30 days prior to termination.

Chapter 11

OWNER RENTS, RENT REASONABLENESS, AND PAYMENT STANDARDS
[24 CFR, 982.503, 982.504, 982.505, 982.507]

INTRODUCTION

The policies in this chapter reflect the amendments to the HUD regulations, which were implemented by the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 for the Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance Program. These amendments became effective on October 1, 1999, which is referred to as the "merger date". These amendments complete the merging of the Section 8 Certificate and Voucher Programs into one program, called the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP).

All Section 8 participant families have been transitioned to the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Rent calculation methods for the HCVP are described at 24 CFR 982.505. The rent calculation formula is specific and is not subject to interpretation.

The PHA will determine rent reasonableness in accordance with 24 CFR 982.507(a). It is the responsibility of the PHA to ensure that rents charged by the owners of units occupied by HCVP participants are reasonable based upon a comparison with rents charged by the owners of comparable unassisted units in the rental market, using the criteria specified in 24 CFR 982.507(b).

This chapter explains the PHA's procedures for determination of rent-reasonableness, payments to owners, adjustments to the payment standards, and rent adjustments.

A. RENT TO OWNER IN THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

The amount of rent paid to an owner (i.e., the rent to owner, or the contract rent) is limited only by rent reasonableness. The PHA must demonstrate that the rent to owner is reasonable in comparison to rent for other comparable unassisted units.

The only other limitation on rent to owner is the maximum rent standard (i.e., the payment standard) at initial occupancy (24 CFR 982.508). At the time when a family initially receives tenant-based assistance for occupancy of a *particular* dwelling unit, whether that family is a new admission to the HCVP or is assisted through a move to a different unit than that which they previously occupied, if the gross rent (i.e., the contract rent plus the amount of the utility allowance) for the unit exceeds the applicable payment standard for the family, the family share may not exceed 40 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income.

During the initial term of the lease, the owner may not request an increase in the rent to owner.

B. MAKING PAYMENTS TO OWNERS [24 CFR 982.451]

Once the HAP contract is executed, the PHA begins to process a monthly housing assistance payment (HAP) to the landlord. The effective date and the amount of the HAP are communicated by letter to both landlord and tenant. A HAP register will be used as the basis for monitoring the accuracy and timeliness of payments. Changes are made to the HAP register effective the following month. Checks are disbursed by the PHA to the owner each month.

Checks that are not received will not be replaced until a written request has been received from the payee and a stop payment order has been put on the check.

Excess Payments

The total of rent paid by the tenant plus the housing assistance payment made by the PHA to the owner may not be more than the rent to owner. The owner must immediately return any excess payment to the PHA.

Owners who do not return excess payments will be subject to penalties as outlined in Chapter 18 of this administrative plan, "Owner or Family Debts to the PHA."

Late Payments to Owners

The PHA will not be obligated to pay any late payment penalty if HUD determines that late payment is due to factors beyond the control of the PHA, such as a delay in the receipt of program funds from HUD. The PHA will use administrative fee income or the administrative fee reserve as its only source for any late payment penalty paid to an owner. The PHA will not use any program funds for the payment of late payment penalties to the owner.

C. RENT REASONABLENESS DETERMINATIONS [24 CFR 982.507]

The PHA will determine and document on a case-by-case basis that the rent approved for a unit is reasonable in comparison with rent charged for other comparable unassisted units in the market. This applies to all programs.

The PHA will not approve tenancy until it determines that the initial rent to owner is a reasonable rent. The PHA must re-determine the reasonable rent before any increase in the rent to owner. *The PHA must also re-determine the reasonable rent if there is a five percent (5%) decrease in the published fair market rent (FMR) for the unit size rented by the family which goes into effect sixty (60) days before the contract anniversary, as compared with the FMR in effect one year before the contract anniversary.*

The PHA must re-determine rent reasonableness if directed to do so by HUD, and/or if based on a need identified by the PHA's auditing system. The PHA may elect to re-determine rent reasonableness at any other time. At all times during the assisted tenancy, the rent to owner may not exceed the reasonable rent as most recently determined or re-determined by the PHA

The owner will be advised that by accepting each monthly housing assistance payment she or he will be certifying that the rent to owner is not more than rent charged by the owner for comparable unassisted units in the premises.

If requested, the owner must give the PHA information on rents charged by the owner for other units in the premises or elsewhere. The data for other unassisted units will be gathered from newspapers, realtors, professional associations, inquiries to owners, market surveys, and other available sources.

Because the PHA's jurisdiction covers the entire State of Connecticut, the market areas for rent reasonableness are defined sectors within that jurisdiction which include boroughs, villages, districts and neighborhoods. Subject units within a defined housing market area will be compared to similar units within the same area.

The following items will be used for rent reasonableness documentation:

Size (number of bedrooms/square footage)

Location

Quality

Age of unit

Unit type

Utilities

Amenities

Rent Reasonableness Methodology

Information is gathered on rental units throughout the state by defined market areas, and each unit is rated, using the PHA's rent reasonableness system. The average rents are identified for units of like size and type within the same market area. Each defined factor of the items listed above on the unit to be assisted will be compared to those of comparable unassisted units in the database.

The PHA has contracted for, or purchased a statewide rental housing market database and rent reasonableness system. It will incorporate all of the above factors: size, location, quality, age of unit, unit type, utilities and amenities.

D. PAYMENT STANDARDS FOR THE VOUCHER PROGRAM
[24 CFR 982.503]

The payment standard is used to calculate the housing assistance payment for a family. In accordance with HUD regulations, the PHA has set the voucher payment standard amount between 100 and 110 percent of the fair market rents (FMR) published by HUD. The PHA reviews the appropriateness of the payment standard annually when the FMR is published. In determining whether a change is needed, the PHA will ensure that the payment standard is always within the basic range of 90 percent to 110 percent of the new FMR, unless an exception payment standard has been approved by HUD.

The PHA will establish a single voucher payment standard amount for each FMR area in the PHA jurisdiction. For each FMR area, the PHA will establish payment standard amounts for each unit size (as determined by the number of bedrooms in a unit). The PHA may have a higher payment standard within the its jurisdiction if that is needed to expand housing opportunities outside areas of minority or poverty concentration, as long as the payment standard is within the range of 90-110% of FMR, as funding permits.

The PHA may approve a higher payment standard within the basic range, if required as a reasonable accommodation for a family that includes a person with a disability or disabilities.

E. ADJUSTMENTS TO PAYMENT STANDARDS [24 CFR 982.503]

Payment standards may be adjusted, within HUD regulatory limitations, to increase housing assistance payments in order to keep families' rents affordable. The PHA will not raise payment standards solely to make "high end" units available to voucher-holders. The PHA may use some or all of the measures noted below in making its determination as to whether an adjustment should be made to the payment standards.

Assisted Families' Rent Burdens

The PHA will review its voucher payment standard amounts at least annually to determine whether more than 40 percent of families in a particular unit size are paying more than 30% of their annual adjusted income for rent.

If it is determined that particular unit sizes in the PHA's jurisdiction have payment standard amounts that are creating rent burdens for families, the PHA will modify its payment standards for those particular unit sizes.

The PHA will establish a separate voucher payment standard, within the basic range, for designated parts of its jurisdiction if it determines that a higher payment standard is needed in these designated areas to provide families with quality housing choices and to give families an opportunity to move outside areas of concentration of high poverty and low income.

Quality of Units Selected

The PHA will review the quality of units selected by participant families when making the determination of the proportion of their income that families are paying for housing, in order to ensure that payment standard increases are only made when they are needed to reach the mid-range of the market.

PHA Decision Point

The PHA will review the average proportion of their income that HCVP participant families are paying for rent. If more than 35% of families are paying more than 30% of monthly adjusted income for a particular unit size, the PHA will determine whether families are renting units larger than their voucher size, and whether families are renting units which exceed HUD's HQS and any additional standards added by the PHA in this administrative plan.

If families are paying more than 30% of their income for rent due to the selection of larger bedroom size units or luxury units, the PHA may decline to increase the payment standard. If these are not the primary factors for families paying higher rents, the PHA will continue (increasing/to increase) the payment standard.

Rent to Owner Increases

The PHA may review a sample of unassisted units to determine both a) how often owners are increasing rents and b) the average percent of increase by bedroom size.

Time to Locate Housing

The PHA may also consider the average time period for families to lease up under the HCVP. If more than 25% of voucher-holders are unable to locate suitable housing within the initial term of the voucher and the PHA determines that this is due to rents in the jurisdiction being unaffordable for families, even those with an HCVP voucher, the payment standard may be adjusted. The PHA will maintain records of those families who were unsuccessful in finding units within the time-frame allowed by the PHA.

Lowering of the Payment Standard

Lowering the FMR may require an adjustment of the payment standard. Additionally, statistical analysis may reveal that the payment standard should be lowered. In any case, the payment standard will not be set below 90 percent of the FMR without authorization from HUD.

Financial Feasibility

Before increasing the payment standard, the PHA will review the budget to determine the impact that projected subsidy increases would have on the funding available for the program and on the number of families served.

For this purpose, the PHA will compare the number of families who could be served under a

higher payment standard with the number assisted under the payment standard currently in place.

File Documentation

A file will be retained by the PHA for at least three years in order to document the analysis and findings used to justify whether or not the payment standard was changed.

F. EXCEPTION PAYMENT STANDARDS

If the dwelling unit is located in an exception area, the PHA must use the appropriate payment standard amount established by the PHA for the exception area in accordance with regulation 24 CFR 982.503(c).

G. OWNER PAYMENT IN THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM [(24CFR 982.308(g)]

The owner is required to notify the PHA in writing at least sixty days before any change in the amount of rent to owner is scheduled to go into effect. Any requested change in rent to owner will be subject to rent reasonableness requirements. See 24 CFR 982.503.

Chapter 12

RE-EXAMINATIONS
[24 CFR 982.516]

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with HUD requirements, the PHA will re-examine the income and household composition of all families at least annually. Families will be provided with accurate annual and interim rent adjustments. Re-examinations and interim examinations will be processed in a manner that ensures families are given reasonable notice of rent increases. All annual activities will be coordinated in accordance with HUD regulations. It is a HUD requirement that families report all changes in household composition. This chapter defines the PHA's policy for conducting annual re-examinations and coordinating annual activities. It also explains the interim reporting requirements for families and the standards for timely reporting of changes.

A. ANNUAL ACTIVITIES [24 CFR 982.516, 982.405]

There are two activities the PHA must conduct on an annual basis. These activities will be coordinated around the anniversary date of the HAP contract:

1. Re-examination of income and family composition

2. HQS inspection

The PHA produces a monthly listing of assisted units under contract to ensure that timely reviews of housing quality and of factors related to total tenant payment and family share can be made.

Re-examination of the family's income and composition must be conducted at least annually.

Annual inspections: see Chapter 10 of this administrative plan, "Housing Quality Standards and Inspections."

Rent Adjustments: see Chapter 11 of this administrative plan, "Owner Rents, Rent Reasonableness, and Payment Standards."

B. ANNUAL RE-EXAMINATION [24 CFR 982.516]

Families are required to be re- examined at least annually.

Moves Between Re-examinations

When families move to another dwelling unit, an annual re-examination will be scheduled (unless a re-examination has occurred in the last 120 days) and the anniversary date will be changed.

Income limits are not used as a test for continued eligibility at re-examination.

Re-examination Notice to the Family

The PHA will maintain a re-examination tracking system and the household will be notified by mail of the date and time for their interview at least 120 days in advance of the anniversary date. If requested as a reasonable accommodation by a person with a disability, the PHA will provide the notice in an accessible format. The PHA will also mail the notice to a third party, if requested as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities. These accommodations will be granted upon verification that they meet the need presented by the disability.

Procedure
The PHA's procedure for conducting an annual re-examination will be:

Schedule the date and time of appointment(s) and mail notification to the family.

Completion of Annual Re-examination

The PHA will have all re-examination for families completed before the anniversary date. This includes notifying the family of any changes in rent at least 30 days before the scheduled date of the change in family rent.

Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities who are unable to come to the PHA's office will be granted an accommodation by conducting the interview at the person's home or by mail, upon verification that the accommodation requested meets the need presented by the disability.

Collection of Information [24 CFR 982.516(f)]

The PHA has established appropriate re-examination procedures necessary to ensure that the income data provided by families is complete and accurate.

The PHA will require the family to complete a personal declaration form prior to all re-examination interviews. The family will be given no more than 30 days to complete this form and return it in the return-addressed envelope provided. Prior to the interview, the PHA will run an EIV, EMS-CAP and DOL report for comparison to the personal declaration form.

Requirements to Attend

Only the head or co-head of household will be required to attend the re-examination interview. If the head of household is unable to attend the interview, the appointment will be re-scheduled.

Failure to Respond to Notification of Re-examination

The written notification must state which family member is required to attend the interview. The family may call to request another appointment date up to 48 hours prior to the interview.

If the family does not appear for the re-examination interview, and has not re-scheduled or made prior arrangements with the PHA, the PHA will re-schedule a second appointment.

If the family fails to appear for the second appointment, and has not re-scheduled or made other prior arrangements, the PHA will send the family notice of termination and offer them an informal hearing

Exceptions to this policy may be made if the family is able to document an emergency situation that prevented it from canceling or attending the appointment, *or if requested as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability.*

Documents Required From the Family

In the notification letter to the family, the PHA will include instructions for the family to bring documentation of all liquid and non-liquid assets to the re-examination, as well as any additional information that may affect the family's re-examination status. All information brought to the PHA in person **(excluding 3rd party),** will be date stamped and copies of the date stamped verification will be returned to the tenant.

Verification of Information

The PHA will follow the verification procedures and guidelines described in this plan. Verifications for re-examinations must be less than 120 days old.

Tenant Rent Increase

If the tenant rent increases, a thirty (30) day notice is mailed to the family prior to the annual re-examination date.

If less than thirty days are remaining before the scheduled effective date of the annual re-examination, the tenant rent increase will be effective on the first of the month following the thirty (30) day notice.

If there has been a misrepresentation or a material omission by the family, or if the family causes a delay in the re-examination processing, there will be a retroactive increase in rent to the anniversary date.

Tenant Rent Decreases

If the tenant rent decreases as a result of an annual re-examination, it will be effective on the anniversary date or on the first day of the month following completion of the re-examination process, whichever is sooner.

If the family causes a delay so that the processing of the re-examination is not complete by the anniversary date, the rent change will be effective on the first day of the month following completion of the re-examination processing by the PHA.

C. REPORTING INTERIM CHANGES [24 CFR 982.516]

Program participants must report all changes in household composition to the PHA between annual re-examinations. This includes additions due to birth, adoption and court-awarded custody. The family must obtain PHA approval prior to all other additions to the household.

If any new family member is added, family income must include any income of the new family member. Participant requests to remove members from the household must be accompanied by proof of the new residence. The PHA will conduct a reexamination to determine any resulting changes to the household income and will make the appropriate adjustments in the housing assistance payment and family unit size.

The U.S. citizenship/eligible immigrant status of additional family members must be declared and verified as required at the first interim or regular re-examination after moving into the unit.

Interim Reexamination Policy

Families will be required to report all increases in income or assets within 30 days of the increase or be subject to repayment or termination. (See chapter 18 Owner or Family Debts to the PHA).

The PHA will process interim re-examinations when families have an increase in income that results in an increase of at least fifty dollars ($50.00) per month in tenant rent.

Decreases in Income

Participants may report a decrease in income and other changes which would reduce the amount of tenant rent, such as an increase in allowances or deductions. The change which may result in a rent decrease must be calculated by the PHA within a reasonable time after the request.

PHA Errors

If the PHA makes a calculation error at admission to the program or at an annual re-examination, an interim re-examination will be conducted, if necessary, to correct the error, but the family will not be charged retroactively. Families will be given decreases, when applicable; retroactive to when the decrease for the change would have been effective if calculated correctly.

D. OTHER INTERIM REPORTING ISSUES

An interim re-examination does not affect the date of the annual re-examination.

An interim re-examination will be scheduled and conducted for families with zero income every 90 days.

If there is a change from welfare benefit income to employment income, the PHA will defer the family's rent increase for six months or until the family's next annual re-examination, whichever comes first, in order to encourage families to move to self-sufficiency. This incentive will be provided only once to any family member, and will not be provided to persons who work seasonally.

In the following circumstances, the PHA may conduct the interim re-examination by mail:

Changes that will not result in a change in tenant rent or voucher size.

Changes in income that are normal for the family, such as seasonal employment..

As a reasonable accommodation when requested (see Chapter 1 of this administrative plan, "Statement of Policies and Objectives").

Any changes reported by participants other than those listed in this section will be noted in the file by the staff person but will not be processed between regularly scheduled annual re-examinations.

E. INCOME CHANGES RESULTING FROM WELFARE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 5.615]

The PHA will not reduce the family share of the rent for families whose welfare assistance is reduced due to a "specified welfare benefit reduction", which is a reduction in benefits by the welfare agency specifically because of fraud in connection with the welfare program, or non-compliance with an agency requirement to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program.

However, the PHA will reduce the rent if the welfare assistance reduction is a result of the expiration of a lifetime time limit on receiving benefits, or a situation where the family has complied with welfare program requirements but cannot or has not obtained employment, or a situation where a family member has not complied with other welfare agency requirements.

The family's annual income will include the imputed welfare income, as determined at the family's annual or interim re-examination, during the term of welfare benefits reduction (as specified by the welfare agency).

Definition of Covered Family

A covered family is a household that receives benefits for welfare or public assistance from a state or public agency program which requires, as a condition of eligibility to receive assistance, the participation of a family member in an economic self-sufficiency program.

Definition of "Imputed Welfare Income"

Imputed welfare income is the amount of annual income not actually received by a family (as a result of a specified welfare benefit reduction) that is included in the family's income for purposes of determining rent.

The amount of imputed welfare income is determined by the PHA, based on written information supplied to the PHA by the welfare agency, including:

the amount of the benefit reduction.

the term of the benefit reduction.

the reason for the reduction.

subsequent changes in the term or amount of the benefit reduction.

The family's annual income will include the imputed welfare income as determined at the family's annual or interim re-examination (during the term of the welfare benefits reduction, as specified by the welfare agency).

The amount of imputed welfare income will be offset by the amount of additional income the family receives that commences after the sanction was or is *imposed.* When additional income from other sources is at least equal to the imputed welfare income, the imputed welfare income will be reduced to zero.

If the family was not an assisted resident when the welfare sanction began, imputed welfare income will not be included in annual income.

If the family claims the amount of imputed welfare income has been calculated incorrectly, the housing supervisor will review the calculation for accuracy. If the imputed welfare income amount is correct, the PHA will provide a written notice to the family that includes a brief explanation of how the amount of imputed welfare income was determined, and a statement that the family may request an informal hearing if they do not agree with the PHA determination.

Verification Before Denying a Request to Reduce Rent

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

The PHA will rely on the welfare agency's written notice to the PHA regarding welfare sanctions.

Cooperation Agreements [24 CFR 5.613]

The PHA will rely on the welfare agency's written notice regarding the amount of specified benefit reduction.

Family Dispute of Amount of Imputed Welfare Income

If the family disputes the amount of imputed income and the PHA denies the family's request to modify the amount, the PHA will provide the tenant with a notice of denial, which will include an explanation for the PHA's determination of the amount of imputed welfare income, and a statement that the tenant may request an informal hearing.

F. NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS OF RE-EXAMINATION [HUD Notice PIH 98-6]

The HUD form 50058 will be completed and transmitted as required by HUD.

The notice of rent adjustment is mailed to the owner and the tenant. Signatures are not required by the PHA. If the family disagrees with the rent adjustment, they may request an informal hearing.

G. TIMELY REPORTING OF CHANGES IN INCOME AND ASSETS
[24 CFR 982.516(c)]

Standard for Timely Reporting of Changes

The PHA requires that families report interim changes in writing to the PHA within 30 days of when the change occurs. Any information, document or signature, which is needed to verify the change, must be provided within this time frame.

If the change is not reported within the required time period, or if the family fails to provide documentation or signatures, it will be considered untimely reporting.

Procedures when the Change is Reported in a Timely Manner

The PHA will notify the family and the owner of any change in the HAP to be effective according to the following guidelines:

increases in the tenant rent are effective on the first of the month following at least thirty days' notice.

decreases in the tenant rent are effective the first of the month following that in which the change is reported. However, no rent reductions will be processed until all the facts have been verified, even if a retroactive adjustment results.

Procedures when the Change is Not Reported by the Tenant in a Timely Manner

If the family does not report the change as described under "Timely Reporting of Changes in Income and Assets," above, the family will have caused an unreasonable delay in the interim re-examination processing and the following guidelines will apply:

an increase in tenant rent will be effective retroactive to the date on which it would have been effective had it been reported on a timely basis. The family will be liable for any overpaid housing assistance and may be required to sign a repayment agreement or make a lump sum repayment.

a decrease in tenant rent will be effective on the first of the month following the month in which the change was reported.

Procedures when the Change is Not Processed by the PHA in a Timely Manner

"Processed in a timely manner" means that the change goes into effect on the date it should when the family reports the change in a timely manner, as described above. If the change is not made

effective on that date, the change is not processed by the PHA in a timely manner.

In this case, an increase will be effective after the required thirty days' notice prior to the first of the month after completion of processing by the PHA.

If the change resulted in a decrease, the overpayment by the family will be calculated retroactively to the date it should have been effective, and the family will be credited for the amount.

H. CHANGES IN VOUCHER SIZE AS A RESULT OF CHANGES IN FAMILY COMPOSITION [24 CFR 982.516(c)]

See Chapter 5 of this administrative plan, "Subsidy Standards."

I. CONTINUANCE OF ASSISTANCE FOR "MIXED" FAMILIES [24 CFR 5.518]

Under the non-citizens rule, "mixed" families are families that include at least one citizen or eligible immigrant and any number of ineligible members.

"Mixed" families who were participants as of June 19, 1995 shall continue receiving full assistance if they meet all of the following criteria:

1. The PHA implemented the non-citizens rule prior to November 29, 1996, and

2. The head of household or spouse is a U.S. citizen or has eligible immigrant status, and

3. All members of the family other than the head, the spouse, parents of the head or the spouse, and children of the head or spouse are citizens or eligible immigrants. The family may make a change in who is designated as the head of household in order to qualify under this provision.

J. MISREPRESENTATION OF FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES

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

Chapter 13

MOVES WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE/PORTABILITY
[24 CFR 982.314, 982.353. 982.355(a)]

INTRODUCTION

HUD regulations permit families to move with continued assistance to another unit within the PHA's jurisdiction or, under portability procedures, to a unit outside of the PHA's jurisdiction. The regulations also allow the PHA the discretion to develop policies which define any limitations or restrictions on moves. This chapter defines the procedures for moves both within and outside of the PHA's jurisdiction. It also outlines the policies for restrictions and limitations on moves.

A. ALLOWABLE MOVES

A family may move to a new unit with continued assistance if:

1. The assisted lease for the old unit has terminated because the PHA has terminated the HAP contract for owner breach, or because the lease was terminated by mutual agreement of the owner and the family.

2. The owner has given the family a notice to vacate, or has commenced an action to evict the tenant, or has obtained a court judgment or begun another process allowing the owner to evict the family (unless assistance to the family will be terminated).

3. The family has given proper notice of lease termination (if the family has a right to terminate the lease on notice to owner) for owner breach or otherwise.

B. RESTRICTIONS ON MOVES [24 CFR 982.314, 982.552(a)]

Families will not be permitted to move within the PHA's jurisdiction during the initial term of assisted occupancy.

Families will not be permitted to move outside the PHA's jurisdiction under portability procedures during the initial term of assisted occupancy.

Families will not be permitted to move more than once in a twelve (12) month period.

The PHA will deny permission to move if there is insufficient funding for continued assistance.

The PHA will deny permission to move to if:

The family has violated a family obligation.
The family owes the (or any) PHA money.
The family has moved or been issued a voucher within the last twelve (12) months.

The housing director may make exceptions to these restrictions if there is an emergency reason or other good cause for the move over which the participant has no control.

C. PROCEDURE FOR MOVES [24 CFR 982.314]

Issuance of Voucher

Subject to the restrictions on moves, if the family has not been re-examined within the last 120 days, the PHA will issue the voucher to move as soon as the family requests the move.

If the family does not locate a new unit, the family will not lose its assistance and may remain in the current unit so long as the owner permits and there is a HAP contract in place.

The annual re-examination date will be changed to coincide with the new lease-up date.

Notice Requirements

Briefing sessions shall emphasize the family's responsibility to give the owner and the PHA proper written notice of any intent to move.

The family must give the owner the required number of days written notice of intent to vacate as specified in the lease and must give a copy of the notice of intent to vacate to the PHA simultaneously.

Time of Contract Change

A move within the same building or project, or between buildings owned by the same owner, will be processed like any other move except that there will be no overlapping assistance.

In a move, assistance at the old unit stops at the end of the month in which the tenant ceased to occupy the unit, unless proper notice was given to end a lease mid-month. Assistance will start at the new unit on the effective date of the lease and contract. Assistance payments may overlap for the month in which the family moves.

D. PORTABILITY [24 CFR 982.353]

Portability provisions apply to families moving out of or into the PHA's jurisdiction within the United States and its territories.

E. OUTGOING PORTABILITY [24 CFR 982.353, 982.355]

Within the limitations of the regulations and this policy, a participant family has the right to receive tenant-based voucher assistance to lease a unit outside the PHA's jurisdiction, anywhere in the United States, in the jurisdiction of a receiving PHA with a tenant-based program. When a family requests to move outside of the PHA's jurisdiction, the request must specify the area to which the family wants to move.

If there is more than one PHA in the area in which the family has selected a unit, the initial PHA will choose the receiving PHA.

Restrictions on Portability

Applicants

If neither the head nor the spouse had a domicile (i.e., a legal residence) in the PHA's jurisdiction at the date of their initial application for assistance, the family will not be permitted to exercise portability upon issuance of a voucher, unless the PHA approves such move.

For a portable family that was not already receiving assistance in the PHA's tenant-based programs, the PHA must determine whether the family is eligible for admission under the receiving PHA's program.

Participants

After an applicant has leased-up in the jurisdiction of the initial PHA, they cannot exercise portability during the first year of assisted occupancy, except in the following circumstances: the receiving and initial PHA agree to allow the move, and the family's move relates to an opportunity for education, job training or employment.

The PHA will not permit families to exercise portability:

If the family is in violation of a family obligation.

If the family owes money to the PHA.

If the family has moved out of its assisted unit in violation of the lease.

Receiving PHAs will be required to submit a copy of any hearing determination to the initial PHA within 60 days.

F. INCOMING PORTABILITY [24 CFR 982.354, 982.355]

Absorption or Administration

The PHA will accept a family with a valid voucher from another jurisdiction and will either administer or absorb the voucher.

If the receiving PHA administers the voucher, the family will be issued a voucher by the receiving PHA. The term of the voucher issued by the receiving PHA will not expire before the expiration date of any voucher issued by the initial PHA. The family must submit a request for tenancy approval for an eligible unit to the receiving PHA during the term of the voucher issued by the receiving PHA.

The receiving PHA may grant extensions in accordance with this administrative plan. However, if the family decides not to lease-up in the jurisdiction of the receiving PHA, they must contact the initial PHA to request an extension.

The PHA may absorb vouchers if the number of such absorptions does not exceed 50% of households assisted by the PHA.

When the PHA does not absorb the incoming voucher, it will administer the initial PHA's voucher and the receiving PHA's policies will prevail.

For admission to the program, a family must be income-eligible in the area where the family initially leases a unit with assistance under the program.

The receiving PHA does not re-determine Section 8 eligibility for a family exercising portability when that family was already receiving assistance in the initial PHA's housing choice voucher program.

The PHA will issue a voucher according to its own subsidy standards. If the family experiences a change in family composition which would change the voucher size, the PHA will issue a voucher of the proper size based on its own subsidy standards.

Income and Total Tenant Payment of Incoming Portables [982.353(d)]

As the receiving PHA, the PHA will conduct a re-examination interview but will only verify the information provided if the documents are missing or are over 120 days old, whichever is applicable, or there has been a change in the family's circumstances.

If the PHA conducts a re-examination of the family it will not cause a delay in the issuance of a voucher.

If the family's income is such that a $0 subsidy amount is determined prior to lease-up in the PHA's jurisdiction, the PHA will refuse to enter into a contract on behalf of the family at $0 assistance.

Requests for Tenancy Approval

A briefing will be mandatory for all portability families.

When the family submits an RTA, it will be processed using the PHA's policies. If the family does not submit an RTA or does not execute a lease, the initial PHA will be notified before the expiration of the voucher.

If the family leases up successfully, the receiving PHA will notify the initial PHA within sixty (60) days, and the billing process will commence.

The receiving PHA will notify the initial PHA if the family fails to submit an RTA for an eligible unit within the term of the voucher.

If the PHA denies assistance to the family, the receiving PHA will notify the initial PHA within 60 days and the family will be offered a review or hearing.

The receiving PHA will notify the family of its responsibility to contact the initial PHA if the family wishes to move outside the receiving PHA's jurisdiction under continued portability.

Regular Program Functions

The receiving PHA will perform all program functions applicable the tenant-based assistance program, such as:

Annual re-examinations of family income and composition;

Annual HQS inspection of the unit; and

Interim examinations when requested or deemed necessary by the receiving PHA.

Terminations

The receiving PHA will notify the initial PHA in writing of any termination of assistance within 30 days of the termination. If an informal hearing is required and requested by the family, the hearing will be conducted by the receiving PHA, using the regular hearing procedures included in this plan. A copy of the hearing decision will be furnished to the initial PHA.

The initial PHA will be responsible for collecting amounts owed by the family for claims paid and for monitoring repayment. If the initial PHA notifies the receiving PHA that the family is in arrears or the family has refused to sign a repayment agreement, the receiving PHA will terminate assistance to the family.

Required Documents

As the receiving PHA, this PHA will require the documents listed on the HUD portability billing form from the initial PHA.

Billing Procedures

As the receiving PHA, this PHA will bill the initial PHA quarterly for housing assistance payments. The billing cycle for other amounts including administrative fees and special claims will also be quarterly, unless otherwise requested by the initial PHA.

As receiving PHA, this PHA will bill 100% of the housing assistance payment, 100% of special claims and 80% of the initial PHA's administrative fee as indicated in the Federal Register's Annual Factors For Determining PHA Ongoing Fees, for each "portability" voucher leased as of the first day of the month.

As receiving PHA, this PHA will notify the initial PHA of changes in subsidy amounts and will expect the initial PHA to notify the receiving PHA of changes in the administrative fee amount to be billed.

Chapter 14

CONTRACT TERMINATIONS
[24 CFR 982.311, 982.314]

INTRODUCTION

The housing assistance payments (HAP) contract is the contract between the owner and the PHA which defines the responsibilities of both parties. This chapter describes the circumstances under which the contract can be terminated by the PHA and/or the owner, and the policies and procedures for such terminations.

A. CONTRACT TERMINATION [24 CFR 982.311]

The term of the HAP contract shall be the same as the term of the lease. The HAP contract between the owner and the PHA may be terminated by the action of the PHA, or it may be terminated by the owner or tenant terminating the lease.

No future subsidy payments on behalf of the family will be made by the PHA to the owner after the month in which the HAP contract is terminated. The owner must reimburse the PHA for any subsidies paid in error by the PHA for any period after the contract termination date.

After a contract termination, if the family meets the criteria for a move with continued assistance, the family may lease-up in another unit. The contract for the new unit may begin during the month in which the family moved from the old unit.

B. TERMINATION BY THE FAMILY: MOVES [24 CFR 982.314(c)(2)]

Family termination of the lease must be in accordance with the terms of the lease.

C. TERMINATION OF TENANCY BY THE OWNER: EVICTIONS
[24 CFR 982.310, **982.455**]

If the owner wishes to terminate the lease, the owner must provide proper notice as stated in the lease.

During the term of the lease, the owner may not terminate tenancy except for the grounds stated in the HUD regulations.

During the term of the lease the owner may only evict for:

> Serious or repeated violations of the lease, including but not limited to failure to pay rent or other amounts due under the lease, or repeated violation of the terms and conditions of the lease;

Violations of federal, state or local law that imposes obligations on the tenant in connection with the occupancy or use of the premises; or criminal activity by the tenant, any member of the household, a guest or another person under the tenant's control that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by the other residents, or persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises, or any drug-related criminal activity on or near the premises.

Other good cause.

During the initial term of the lease, the owner may not terminate the tenancy for "other good cause" unless the owner is terminating the tenancy because of something the family did or failed to do.

Evidence of Criminal Activity

The owner may terminate tenancy and evict a family by judicial action for criminal activity by a covered person if the owner determines that the covered person has engaged in the criminal activity:

Regardless of arrest or conviction

Without satisfying the standard of proof used for a criminal conviction.

Termination of Tenancy Decisions

If the law and regulation permit the owner to take an action but do not require action to be taken, the owner can decide whether to take the action. Relevant circumstances for consideration include:

The seriousness of the offense

The effect on the community

The extent of participation by household members

The effect on uninvolved household members

The demand for assisted housing by families who will adhere to responsibilities

The extent to which the leaseholder has shown personal responsibility and taken all reasonable steps to prevent or mitigate the offending action

The effect on the integrity of the program.

Exclusion of Culpable Household Member

The owner may require a tenant to exclude a household member in order to continue to reside in the assisted unit.

Consideration of Rehabilitation

When determining whether to terminate tenancy for illegal drug use or alcohol abuse, the owner may consider whether the member:

Is no longer participating in the activity

Has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program

Has otherwise been successfully rehabilitated

The owner may require the tenant to submit evidence of any of the three actions listed above. Termination by the owner must be consistent with fair housing and equal opportunities as stated in 24 CFR 5.105.

The owner must provide the tenant with a written notice specifying the grounds for termination of tenancy, at or before the commencement of the eviction action. The notice may be included in, or may be combined with, any owner eviction notice to the tenant.

The owner eviction notice means a notice to vacate, or a complaint, or other initial pleading used under state or local law to commence an eviction action.

Housing assistance payments are paid to the owner under the terms of the HAP contract. If the owner has begun eviction and the family continues to reside in the unit, the PHA must continue to make housing assistance payments to the owner until the owner has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the tenant.

The PHA must continue making housing assistance payments to the owner in accordance with the contract as long as the tenant continues to occupy the unit and the contract is not violated. By endorsing the monthly check from the PHA, the owner certifies that the tenant is still in the unit, that the rent is reasonable and that the tenant is in compliance with the contract.

If an eviction is not due to a serious or repeated violation of the lease, and if the PHA has no other grounds for termination of assistance, the PHA may issue a new voucher so that the family can move with continued assistance.

D. TERMINATION OF THE CONTRACT BY PHA

[24 CFR 982.404(a), 982.453, 982.454, 982.552(a)(3), **982.455**]

The term of the HAP contract terminates when the lease terminates, when the PHA terminates program assistance for the family, or when the owner has breached the HAP contract (see Chapter 16 of this administrative plan, "Owner Disapproval and Restriction").

Termination Due to Abatement of Unit

The PHA will terminate the HAP contract 30 days after the unit goes into abatement and the tenant will be issued a voucher to move. If the owner makes the required repairs after the HAP contract has been terminated, a new HAP contract and lease will be required for the family to

remain.

The PHA may also terminate the contract if:

- The family is required to move from a unit when the unit does not meet the HQS space standards because of an increase in family size or a change in family composition.

- Funding is no longer available under the ACC.

The contract will terminate automatically if 180 days have passed since the last housing assistance payment has been made to the owner.

Termination of Assistance Due to Lack of Funding

The PHA may terminate the HAP contract in accordance with HUD requirements, if the PHA determines that funding under the consolidated ACC is insufficient to support continued assistance for families in the program (24 CFR 982.454)

When funding under the consolidated ACC is insufficient, the PHA may take the following steps:

The PHA will determine if there are any other non-Section 8 Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) financial resources available to continue housing assistance on behalf of families currently subsidized and whether those resources should be utilized.

In the event ACC funding is insufficient and other financial resources are not available, or a decision has been made not to utilize them, the PHA will determine the number of families that must be terminated using a "last on, first off" methodology. Households selected will receive a minimum of thirty day's notice of termination of assistance. Terminated families will be returned to the HCV waiting list in reverse order to that in, which they were removed. These families will receive first preference for Vouchers from the waiting list.

When Section 8 funding becomes sufficient, families receiving subsidy through non-Section 8 funding will be reinstated first, prior to any assistance being offered to applicants on the waiting list.

Notice of Termination

When the PHA terminates the HAP contract under the violation of HQS space standards, the PHA will provide the owner and family written notice of termination of the contract, and the HAP contract terminates at the end of the calendar month that follows the calendar month in which the PHA gives such notice to the owner.

Chapter 15

DENIAL OR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE
[24 CFR 5.902, 5.903, 5.905, 982.4, 982.54, 982.552, 982.553]

INTRODUCTION

The PHA may deny or terminate assistance for a family because of the family's action or failure to act. The PHA will provide families with a written description of the family obligations under the program, the grounds under which the PHA can deny or terminate assistance, and the PHA's informal hearing procedures. This chapter describes when the PHA is required to deny or terminate assistance, and the PHA's policies for the denial of a new commitment of assistance and the grounds for termination of assistance under an outstanding HAP contract.

A. GROUNDS FOR DENIAL OR TERMINATION [24 CFR 982.54, 982.552, 982.553 982.455]

If denial or termination is based upon behavior resulting from a disability, the PHA will delay the denial or termination in order to determine if there is an accommodation that would negate the behavior resulting from the disability.

Form of Denial or Termination

Denial of assistance for an applicant may include any or all of the following:

1. Denial of placement on the PHA waiting list;
2. Denying or withdrawing a voucher;
3. Refusing to enter into a HAP contract or approve tenancy;
4. Refusing to process or provide assistance under portability procedures.

Termination of assistance for a participant may include any or all of the following:

1. Refusing to enter into a HAP contract or approve tenancy;
2. Terminating housing assistance payments under an outstanding HAP contract; and
3. Refusing to process or provide assistance under portability procedures.

Mandatory Denial and Termination [24 CFR 982.54(d), 982.552(b), 982.553(a), 982.553(b)]
The PHA must deny assistance to applicants and terminate assistance for program participants if the family is under contract and 180 days (or 6 months, depending on the HAP contract used) have elapsed since the PHA's last housing assistance payment was made (see Chapter 14 of this administrative plan, "Contract Terminations").

The PHA must deny assistance to applicants and terminate assistance to program participants convicted of manufacturing or producing methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.

The PHA must deny admission to the program for applicants and terminate assistance for program participants if the PHA determines that any household member is currently engaging in illegal use of a drug. (See section B of this chapter for the PHA's established standards.)

The PHA must deny admission to the program for applicants and terminate assistance for program participants if the PHA determines that it has reasonable cause to believe that a household member's illegal drug use or a pattern of illegal drug use may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents (see Section B of this chapter for the PHA's established standards).

The PHA must deny admission to the program for applicants if the PHA determines that any member of the household is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program (see section B of this chapter for the PHA's established standards regarding criminal background investigation and determining whether a member of the household is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program).

The PHA must terminate program assistance for a family evicted from housing assisted under the voucher program for serious violation of the lease.

The PHA must deny admission to the program for an applicant or terminate assistance for a program participant if any member of the family fails to sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information in accordance with Part 5, subparts B and F.

The PHA must deny admission to the program for applicants or terminate program assistance when required under the regulations to establish citizenship or eligible immigration status.

Grounds for Denial or Termination of Assistance [24 CFR 982.552(c)]

The PHA will deny program assistance for an applicant or terminate program assistance for a participant for any of the following reasons:

- The family violates any family obligation under the program as listed in 24 CFR 982.551.

- Any family member violates the family obligation under 24 CFR 982.551 not to engage in any drug-related activity.

Any family member violates the family obligation under 24 CFR 982.551 not to engage in any violent criminal activity. (See Section J-5 of Program Integrity Addendum for specific procedure) Any family member has been evicted from federally assisted housing in the last three (3) years.

- Any PHA has ever terminated assistance under the program for any member of the family.

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

- The family refuses to enter into a repayment agreement as a result of monies owed due to a program violation.

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

- The family has not reimbursed any PHA for amounts paid to an owner under a HAP contract for rent, damages to the unit, or other amounts owed by the family under the lease.

- The family breaches an agreement with a PHA to pay amounts owed to a PHA, or amounts paid to an owner by a PHA. At its discretion, the PHA may offer the family the opportunity to enter into a repayment agreement. The PHA will prescribe the terms of the agreement (see Chapter 18 of this administrative plan, "Owner or Family Debts to the PHA").

- The family participating in an FSS program fails to comply, without good cause, with the family's FSS contract of participation.

- Any member of the family engages in drug or alcohol abuse which interferes with the health, safety or peaceful enjoyment of other residents (see section B of this chapter).

- Any member of the family commits drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity (see section B of this chapter and 982.553 of the regulations).

- The family has threatened or engaged in abusive or violent behavior toward PHA personnel. "Threatening" refers to oral or written threats or physical gestures that communicate **intent** to abuse or commit violence. "Abusive or violent behavior towards PHA personnel" includes verbal as well as physical abuse or violence. Use of expletives that are generally considered insulting, racial epithets, or other language, written or oral, that is customarily used to insult or intimidate may be cause for termination or denial.

- Actual physical abuse or violence **will always** be cause for termination.

Refer to Chapter 2 of this administrative plan, "Eligibility for Admission," at section F, "Other Criteria for Admissions," for further information.

B. SCREENING AND TERMINATION FOR DRUG ABUSE AND OTHER CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Purpose

All federally assisted housing is intended to provide a place to live and raise families, not a place to commit crime, to use or sell drugs or terrorize neighbors. It is the intention of the State of Connecticut Department of Social Services to fully endorse and implement a policy which is designed to:

Help create and maintain a safe and drug-free community;

Keep our program participants free from threats to their personal and family safety;

Support parental efforts to instill values of personal responsibility and hard work;

Help maintain an environment where children can live safely, learn, and grow up to be productive citizens; and

Assist families in their vocational/educational goals in the pursuit of self-sufficiency.

Administration

All screening procedures shall be administered fairly and in such a way as to not violate rights to privacy or discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality, religion, familial status, disability, gender or other legally protected groups.

This policy will be posted on the PHA's bulletin board and copies made readily available to applicants and participants upon request.

Screening of Applicants

In an effort to prevent future drug-related and other criminal activity, as well as other patterns of behavior that pose a threat to the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents, and as required by Notice 96-27, the PHA will endeavor to screen applicants as thoroughly and fairly as possible.

Such screening will apply to any member of the household who is 18 years of age or older, or who is an emancipated minor.

HUD Definitions

Covered person, for purposes of 24 CFR Part 982 and this chapter, means a tenant, any member of the tenant's household, a guest, or another person under the tenant's control.

Drug means a controlled substance as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802).

Drug-related criminal activity means the illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, or use of a drug, or the possession of a drug with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute or use the drug.

Guest, for purposes of this chapter and 24 CFR part 5, subpart A and 24 CFR Part 982, means a person temporarily staying in the unit with the consent of a tenant or other member of the household who has express or implied authority to so consent on behalf of the tenant. The requirements of part 982 apply to a guest as so defined.

Household, for the purposes of 24 CFR Part 982 and this chapter, means the family and any PHA-approved live-in aide(s).

Other person under the tenant's control, for the purposes of the definition of *covered person*, for 24 CFR Parts 5 and 982 and for this chapter, means that the person, although not staying as a guest (as defined in this chapter) in the unit, is (or was at the time of the activity in question) on the premises because of an invitation from the tenant or other member of the household who has express or implied authority to so consent on behalf of the tenant. Absent evidence to the contrary, a person temporarily and infrequently on the premises solely for legitimate commercial purposes is not *under the tenant's control.*

Violent criminal activity means any criminal activity that has as one of its elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force substantial enough to cause, or be reasonably likely to cause, serious bodily injury or property damage.

Standard for Violation

The PHA will deny participation in the program to applicants and terminate assistance to participants in cases where the PHA determines there is probable cause to believe that a household member is illegally using a drug or if the person abuses alcohol in a way that may interfere with the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents, including cases where the PHA determines that there is a pattern of illegal use of a drug or a pattern of alcohol abuse.

Engaged in or engaging in violent criminal activity means any act within the past 3 years by an applicant or participant or household member which involved criminal activity that has as one of its elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force substantial enough to cause, or be reasonably likely to cause, serious bodily injury or property damage, which resulted in the conviction of the applicant, participant, or household member.

In evaluating evidence of negative past behavior, the PHA will give fair consideration to the seriousness of the activity with respect to how it would affect other residents and/or the likelihood of favorable conduct in the future which could be supported by evidence of rehabilitation.

Drug-Related and Violent Criminal Activity

Ineligibility for Admission if Evicted for Drug-Related Activity: Persons evicted from federally assisted housing because of drug-related criminal activity are ineligible for admission to the Section 8 program for a three year period beginning on the date of such eviction.

However, the household may be admitted if, after considering the individual circumstances of the household, the PHA determines that:

*The evicted household member who engaged in drug-related criminal activity has successfully completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program approved by the PHA, or

*The circumstances leading to eviction no longer exist because the criminal household member has died or is imprisoned.

Applicants will be denied assistance if they have been engaged in/ or convicted of violent criminal activity within the last three (3) years prior to the date of the certification interview.

Denial of Assistance for Sex Offenders

The PHA will deny admission if any member of the household is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program. In screening applicants, the PHA will perform criminal history background checks to determine whether any household member is subject to a lifetime sex offender registration requirement.

Termination of Assistance for Participants

Termination of Assistance for Drug-Related Criminal Activity or Violent Criminal Activity:

Under the family obligations listed at 24 CFR 982.551, the members of the household must not engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. HUD regulations at 24 CFR 982.553(b) requires the PHA to establish standards for termination of assistance when this family obligation is violated. The PHA has established the following standards for termination of assistance for the family when a household member has violated the family obligation to refrain from participating in drug-related or violent criminal activity:

*Assistance will be terminated for participants who have been engaged in/ or convicted of drug-related or violent criminal activity during participation in the program, or who have been evicted from a unit assisted under any federally assisted housing program within the last three (3) years prior to the date of the notice to terminate assistance.

* If any member of the household violates the family obligations by engaging in drug-related or violent criminal activity, the PHA will terminate assistance.

* In appropriate cases, the PHA may permit the family to continue receiving assistance provided that family members determined to have engaged in the proscribed activities will not reside in the unit. If the violating member is a minor, the PHA may consider individual circumstances with the advice of juvenile court officials.

* The PHA will waive the requirement regarding drug-related criminal activity if the person demonstrates successful completion of a credible rehabilitation program approved by the PHA, or the circumstances leading to the violation no longer exist because the person who engaged in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity is no longer in the household due to death or incarceration.

Participation in illegal drug or violent criminal activity.

(a) Termination for other than criminal conviction.
If the PHA moves to terminate for a violation of this nature the following evidence and testimony must presented by the PHA at the hearing.

1. A detailed police report outlining the nature of the arrest
2. The direct testimony of the arresting officer or any officer who was a party to the arrest, and/or
3. Direct testimony by another party who was witness to the violation, i.e. landlord, neighbor etc. who can corroborate the specific violation in relation to the arrest.
4. Any other evidence to substantiate the violation.

(b) Termination for conviction.
If the PHA moves to terminate for a violation of this nature one or more of the following should be presented at the hearing.

1. A court document outlining the specific offense and resulting conviction.
2. Department of Corrections incarceration record indicating the nature of the offense that resulted in incarceration and/ or probation.
3. Any other documentation that can attest to the conviction.

Terminating Assistance for Alcohol Abuse by Household Members

Under the family obligations listed at 24 CFR 982.551, the members of the household must not abuse alcohol in a way that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. Assistance will be terminated due to violation of a family obligation if the PHA determines that a member of the household has demonstrated a pattern of alcohol abuse that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.

* In appropriate cases, the PHA may permit the family to continue receiving assistance provided that household members determined to have engaged in the proscribed activities will not reside

in the unit. If the violating member is a minor, the PHA may consider individual circumstances with the advice of juvenile court officials.

Required Evidence (Standard of Proof)

Preponderance of evidence is defined as evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence which as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is proven more probable than not. The intent is not to prove criminal liability, but to establish that the act(s) occurred. Preponderance of evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence.

Credible evidence may be obtained from police and/or court records. Testimony from neighbors, when combined with other factual evidence, can be considered credible evidence. Other credible evidence includes documentation of arrest warrants and/or drug raids.

Confidentiality of Criminal Records

The PHA will ensure that any criminal record received is maintained confidentially, not misused or improperly disseminated, and destroyed once the purpose for which it was requested is accomplished.

C. FAMILY OBLIGATIONS [24 CFR 982.551]

1. The family must supply any information that the PHA or HUD determines is necessary in the administration of the program, including submission of required evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status (as provided by 24 CFR 982.551). "Information" includes any requested certification, release or other documentation.

2. The family must supply any information requested by the PHA or HUD for use in a regularly scheduled re-examination or interim re-examination of family income and composition in accordance with HUD requirements.

3. The family must disclose and verify Social Security numbers (as provided by 24 CFR 5.216) and must sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information in accordance with 24 CFR 5.230.

4. All information supplied by the family must be true and complete.

5. The family is responsible for an HQS breach caused by the family as described in 982.404(b).

6. The family must allow the PHA to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice.

7. The family may not commit any serious or repeated violations of the lease.

8. The family must notify the owner and, at the same time, notify the PHA before the family

moves out of the unit or terminates the lease upon notice to the owner.

9. The family must promptly give the PHA a copy of any owner eviction notice.

10. The family must use the assisted unit for residence by the family. The unit must be the family's only residence.

11. The composition of the assisted family residing in the unit must be approved by the PHA. The family must promptly inform the PHA of the birth, adoption or court-awarded custody of a child. The family must request PHA approval to add any other family member as an occupant of the unit.

12. The family must promptly notify the PHA if any family member no longer resides in the unit.

13. If the PHA has given approval, a foster child or a live-in aide may reside in the unit. If the family does not request approval or PHA approval is denied, the family may not allow a foster child or live-in aide to reside with the assisted family.

14. Members of the household may engage in legal profit-making activities in the unit, but only if such activities are incidental to primary use of the unit as a residence by members of the family.

15. The family must not sublease or let the unit.

16. The family must not assign the lease or transfer the unit.

17. The family must supply any information or certification requested by the PHA to verify that the family is living in the unit, or relating to family absence from the unit, including any PHA-requested information or certification on the purposes of family absences. The family must cooperate with the PHA for this purpose. The family must promptly notify the PHA of absence from the unit.

18. The family must not own or have any interest in the unit.

19. The members of the family must not commit fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the Section 8 housing choice voucher program.

20. The household members may not engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.

21. The members of the household must not abuse alcohol in a way that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.

22. An assisted family, or members of the family, may not receive Section 8 tenant-based assistance while receiving another housing subsidy, for the same unit or for a different unit, under any federal, state or local housing assistance program determined by HUD or in accordance with HUD requirements to be duplicative.

Housing Authority Discretion [24 CFR 982.552(c)]

In deciding whether to deny or terminate assistance because of action or failure to act by members of the family, the PHA has discretion to consider all of the circumstances in each case, including the seriousness of the case. The PHA will use its discretion in reviewing the extent of participation or culpability of individual family members and the length of time since the violation occurred. The PHA may also review the family's recent history and record of compliance, and the effects of denial or termination of assistance on other family members who were not involved in the action or failure to act.

The PHA may impose, as a condition of continued assistance for other family members, a requirement that family members who participated in or were culpable for the action or failure to act will not reside in the unit. The PHA may permit the other members of a family to continue in the program.

Enforcing Family Obligations

Explanations and Terms

The term "promptly" when used in the family obligations **always** means "within **thirty (30)** days."

Denial or termination of assistance is always optional except where this plan or the regulations state otherwise.

HQS Breach: The PHA will determine if an HQS breach as identified in 24 CFR 982.404 (b) is the responsibility of the family. Families may be given extensions by the PHA to cure HQS breaches.

Lease Violations: The following criteria will be used to decide if a serious or repeated violation of the lease has occurred which will result in termination of assistance:

If the owner terminates tenancy through court action for serious or repeated violation of the lease.

If there are police reports, neighborhood complaints or other third party information that has been verified by the PHA.

Notification of Eviction: If the family requests assistance to move and they did not notify the PHA of an eviction within ten (10) days of receiving the notice of lease termination, the move will be denied.

Proposed Additions to the Family: The PHA will deny a family's request to add additional family members who are:

Persons who have been evicted from public housing within the past three (3) years.

Persons who have previously violated a family obligation listed in 24CFR 982.551 of the HUD regulations.

Persons who have committed drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity within the past three (3) years.

Persons who do not meet the PHA's definition of a family.

Persons who commit fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program.

Persons who currently owe rent or other amounts to the PHA or to another PHA in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act.

Persons who have engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior toward PHA personnel.

Family Members Move Out: Families are required to notify the PHA if any family member leaves the assisted household. When the family notifies the PHA, they must furnish the following information.

The date the family member moved out.

The new address, if known, of the family member.

A statement as to whether the family member is temporarily or permanently absent.

Limitation on Profit-Making Activity in Unit:

If the business activity area results in the inability of the family to use any of the critical living areas, such as a bedroom (utilized for a business) which therefore is not available for sleeping, it will be considered a violation.

If the PHA determines that the use of the unit as a business is not incidental to its use as a dwelling unit, it will be considered a violation.

If the PHA determines the business is not legal, it will be considered a violation.

Interest in Unit: The owner may not reside in the assisted unit regardless of whether she or he is a member of the assisted family, unless the family owns the mobile home and rents the pad under the voucher program.

Fraud: In each case, the PHA will consider which family members were involved, the circumstances, and any hardship that might be caused to innocent members.

In the Event of False Citizenship Claims: (refer to section D, below)

D. PROCEDURES FOR NON-CITIZENS [24 CFR 5.514, 5.516, 5.518]

Denial or Termination due to Ineligible Immigrant Status

Applicant or participant families in which all members are neither U.S. citizens nor eligible immigrants are not eligible for assistance and must have their assistance terminated. The PHA must offer the family an opportunity for a hearing (see chapter 2 of this administrative plan, "Eligibility for Admissions," at section E, "Citizenship/Eligible Immigration Status").

Assistance may not be terminated while verification of the participant family's eligible immigration status is pending.

False or Incomplete Information

If the individual is unable to verify his or her citizenship, the PHA will give him or her an opportunity to provide a new declaration as an eligible immigrant or an opportunity to elect not to contend his or her status.

The PHA will then verify eligible status, deny, terminate or pro-rate as applicable.

The PHA will deny or terminate assistance based on the submission of false information or on misrepresentation.

Procedure for Denial or Termination

If the family (or any member) claimed eligible immigrant status and the INS primary and secondary verifications failed to document the family status, the family may make an appeal to the INS and request a hearing with the PHA either after the INS appeal or in lieu of the INS appeal.

After the PHA has made a determination of ineligibility, the family will be notified of the determination and the reasons and informed of the option for pro-rated assistance (if applicable).

E. ZERO ($0) ASSISTANCE TENANCIES

HAP Contracts On or After 10/2/95 [24 CFR 982.455 (a)]

The family may remain in the unit at zero ($0) assistance for up to 180 days after the last HAP payment. If the family is still in the unit after 180 days, the assistance will be terminated. If, within the 180 day time frame, an owner rent increase or a decrease in the total tenant payment causes the family to be eligible for a housing assistance payment, the PHA will resume assistance payments for the family.

In order for a family to move to another unit during the 180 days, the rent for the unit would have to be high enough to necessitate a housing assistance payment.

F. MISSED APPOINTMENTS AND DEADLINES [24 CFR 982.551, 982.552 (c)]

It is a family obligation to supply information, documentation, and certification as needed for the PHA to fulfill its responsibilities. The PHA schedules appointments and sets deadlines in order to obtain the required information. The obligations also require that the family allow the PHA to inspect the unit, and appointments are made for this purpose.

An applicant or participant who fails to keep an appointment or fails to supply information required by a deadline without notifying the PHA may be sent a notice of denial or termination of assistance for failure to allow the PHA to inspect the unit or for failure to provide required information.

The family will be given information about the requirement to keep appointments and the number of times appointments will be re-scheduled, as specified in this plan.

Appointments will be scheduled and time requirements will be imposed for the following events and circumstances:

Eligibility for Admissions;
Verification Procedures;
Voucher Issuance and Briefings;
Housing Quality Standards and Inspections;
Re-examinations; and
Appeals.

Acceptable reasons for missing appointments or failing to provide information by deadlines are:

Medical emergency;
Incarceration;
Family emergency; and
Work on training obligations.

Procedure when Appointments Are Missed or Information Is not Provided

For most purposes in this plan, the family will be given two (2) opportunities to attend an appointment or to provide information before being issued a notice of termination or denial for breach of a family obligation.

After issuance of the termination notice, if the family offers to correct the breach within the time allowed to request a hearing, the notice will be rescinded if the family subsequently attends an appointment or provides information and the family does not have a history of non-compliance.

Notification of Eviction: If the family requests assistance to move and they did not notify the PHA of an eviction within ten (10) days of receiving the notice of lease termination, the move will be denied.

Proposed Additions to the Family: The PHA will deny a family's request to add additional family members who are:

Persons who have been evicted from public housing within the past three (3) years.

Persons who have previously violated a family obligation listed in 24CFR 982.551 of the HUD regulations.

Persons who have committed drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity within the past three (3) years.

Persons who do not meet the PHA's definition of a family.

Persons who commit fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program.

Persons who currently owe rent or other amounts to the PHA or to another PHA in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act.

Persons who have engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior toward PHA personnel.

Family Members Move Out: Families are required to notify the PHA if any family member leaves the assisted household. When the family notifies the PHA, they must furnish the following information.

The date the family member moved out.

The new address, if known, of the family member.

A statement as to whether the family member is temporarily or permanently absent.

Limitation on Profit-Making Activity in Unit:

If the business activity area results in the inability of the family to use any of the critical living areas, such as a bedroom (utilized for a business) which therefore is not available for sleeping, it will be considered a violation.

If the PHA determines that the use of the unit as a business is not incidental to its use as a dwelling unit, it will be considered a violation.

If the PHA determines the business is not legal, it will be considered a violation.

Interest in Unit: The owner may not reside in the assisted unit regardless of whether she or he is a member of the assisted family, unless the family owns the mobile home and rents the pad under the voucher program.

Fraud: In each case, the PHA will consider which family members were involved, the circumstances, and any hardship that might be caused to innocent members.

Chapter 16

OWNER DISAPPROVAL AND RESTRICTION
[24 CFR 982.54, 982.453]

INTRODUCTION

It is the policy of the PHA to recruit owners to participate in the voucher program. The PHA will provide owners with prompt and professional service in order to maintain an adequate supply of available housing throughout the jurisdiction of the PHA. The regulations define when the PHA must disallow owner participation in the program, and they provide the PHA discretion to disapprove or otherwise restrict the participation of owners in certain categories. This chapter describes the criteria for owner disapproval and the various penalties for owner violations.

A. DISAPPROVAL OF OWNER [24 CFR 982.306, 982.54(d)(8)]

The owner does not have a right to participate in the program. For purposes of this section, the term "owner" includes a principal or other interested party.

The PHA will disapprove the owner for the following reasons:

- HUD or another agency directly related has informed the PHA that the owner has been disbarred, suspended, or subject to a limited denial of participation under 24 CFR part 24.

- HUD has informed the PHA that the federal government has instituted an administrative or judicial action against the owner for violation of the Fair Housing Act or other federal equal opportunity requirements and that such action is pending.

- HUD has informed the PHA that a court or an administrative agency has determined that the owner violated the Fair Housing Act or other federal equal opportunity requirements.

- Unless their lease was effective prior to June 17, 1998, the owner may not be a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother of any family member. The PHA will waive this requirement as a reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with a disability.

- In cases where the owner and tenant bear the same last name, the PHA may, at its discretion, require the family and/or the owner to certify whether they are related to each other in any way.

-The owner has violated obligations under a housing assistance payments contract under Section 8 of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437f).

-The owner has violated any obligation under the HAP contract for the dwelling unit,

including the owner's obligations to maintain the unit to HQS, including any standards the PHA has adopted in this policy.

-The owner has committed fraud, bribery or any other corrupt act in connection with any federal housing program.

-The owner has engaged in 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 renting units that fail to meet state or local housing codes.

-The owner has failed to comply with regulations, the mortgage or note, or the regulatory agreement for projects with mortgages insured by HUD or loans made by HUD.

B. OWNER RESTRICTIONS AND PENALTIES [24 CFR 982.453]

If an owner has committed fraud or abuse or is guilty of frequent or serious contract violations, the PHA will restrict the owner from future participation in the program for a period of time commensurate with the seriousness of the offense. The PHA may also terminate some or all contracts with the owner.

Before imposing any penalty against an owner, the PHA will review all relevant factors pertaining to the case, and will consider such factors as the owner's record of compliance and the number of violations.

See the Program Integrity Addendum for guidance as to how owner fraud will be handled.

C. CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP

A change in ownership does not require the execution of a new contract however, a new HAP contract and lease must be executed upon the tenant's reexamination date.

The PHA will process a change of ownership only upon the written request of the new owner and only if accompanied by a copy of the escrow statement or other document showing the transfer of title and the Federal Employee Identification Number or Social Security Number of the new owner.

If the new owner does not want an assignment of the contract, the PHA will terminate the HAP contract with the old owner, since she or he is no longer the owner. The new owner may offer the family a new assisted lease. The family may elect to enter into the new lease or move to another unit.

Chapter 17

CLAIMS, MOVE-OUT AND CLOSE-OUT INSPECTIONS
(For HAP Contracts Effective Before October 2, 1995)

This chapter, which applied to the pre-merger certificate and voucher programs, is now obsolete and therefore has been removed

Chapter 18

OWNER OR FAMILY DEBTS TO THE PHA
[24CFR 982.552]

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the PHA's policies for the recovery of monies which have been overpaid to owners on behalf of families. It describes the methods that will be utilized for the collection of monies and the guidelines for different types of debts. It is the PHA's policy to meet the informational needs of owners and families and to communicate the program rules in order to avoid an owner or a family incurring debt due to PHA overpayment. Before a debt is assessed against a family or owner, the family file must contain documentation to support the PHA's claim that the debt is owed. The file must further contain written documentation of the method of calculation, in a clear format for review by the owner, the family, or other interested parties.

When families or owners owe money to the PHA, the PHA will make every effort to collect the debt. The PHA will use a variety of collection tools to recover debts including, but not limited to:

Requests for lump sum repayments;

Repayment agreements;

Suspensions of housing assistance payments;

Reductions of housing assistance payments;

DSS Fraud and Recovery Unit

A. REPAYMENT AGREEMENT FOR FAMILIES [24CFR 982.552 (c)(v-vii)]

A repayment agreement as used in this plan is a document signed by both parties outlining an agreement entered into between the PHA and a person who owes a debt to the PHA. It is similar to a promissory note, but contains more details regarding the nature of the debt, the terms of repayment, any special provisions of the agreement, and the remedies available to the PHA upon default of the agreement.

The terms of this repayment agreement will not exceed thirty-six (36) months. Requests for extensions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

B. DEBTS OWED DUE TO FAMILY ERROR

Where it has been determined by the PHA, that error/late reporting was not a result of false statement, omission, or concealment of a substantive fact, families who owe money to the PHA will be required to repay in accordance with the established repayment procedures **(see Section E)** for a person who owes a debt to the PHA.

C. DEBTS DUE TO PROGRAM FRAUD AND ABUSE [24 CFR 982.163]

Program fraud and abuse is defined as a single act or a pattern of actions that constitutes false statement, omission, or concealment of a substantive fact, made with intent to deceive or mislead, and that results in overpayment of Section 8 Program funds.

The PHA will enter into a repayment agreement with the family (see Section E) if the HAP overpayment is under $2500.00. Program assistance will be terminated for families when the HAP overpayment exceeds $2500.00. The PHA will use the following collection tools attempt to recover debts including but not limited to:

-Requests for lump sum repayments
-Repayment agreements
-HAP overpayments in excess of $10,000 will be referred to the Department of Social Services Fraud Recovery Unit for collection.

D. DEBTS DUE TO MINIMUM RENT TEMPORARY HARDSHIP

If the family owes the PHA money for rent arrears incurred during the minimum rent period, the PHA will calculate the total amount owed to arrive at a reasonable payback amount that the family will be required to pay to the PHA monthly in addition to the family's regular monthly rent repayment to the owner. The family will be required to pay the increased amount until the arrears are paid in full to the PHA.

The terms of this repayment agreement will not exceed thirty-six (36) months. Requests for extensions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

If the family goes into default on the repayment agreement for back rent incurred during a minimum rent period, the PHA will re-evaluate the family's financial situation and determine whether the family has the ability to pay the increased rent amount and, if not, restructure the existing repayment agreement.

E. GUIDELINES FOR REPAYMENT AGREEMENTS [24 CFR 982.552 (c)(v-vii)]

Initial Payment	Amount Owned	Max. Term of Monthly Payments Paid
Total Amount *	$0-50	Date of Agreement
20% due*	$51-1000	12 months
15% due*	$1001-2500	24 months
10% due*	$2501-and above	36 months

* Due at execution of the Repayment Agreement

Repayment agreements will be executed between the PHA and the head of household and spouse. Repayments may only be made by money order, cashier's check and personal check. The PHA has the right to refuse personal checks.

A repayment will be considered to be in arrears if the repayment is not received by the close of the business day 10 days after the due date.

The family will be allowed only two **consecutive** late payments during the course of the repayment agreement. Payment must be received before the due date of the next payment or housing assistance will be terminated.

If the family requests a move to another unit and has a repayment agreement in place, and the repayment agreement is not in arrears, the family will be permitted to move.

If the family requests a move to another unit and is in arrears on a repayment agreement, they will be permitted to move, if they pay the past due amount.

The amount of the monthly repayments may be decreased in cases of family hardship if requested with reasonable notice from the family, verification of the hardship, and the approval of the PHA. Additional Monies Owed: If the family already has a repayment agreement in place and incurs an additional debt to the PHA, the additional amount owed by the family will be added to the existing repayment agreement.

F. OWNER DEBTS TO THE PHA [24 CFR 982.453(b)]

If the PHA determines that the owner has retained housing assistance or repayments to which the owner is not entitled, the PHA may reclaim the amounts from future housing assistance repayments owed to the owner for any unit or units under contract.

If future housing assistance or repayments are insufficient to reclaim the amount owed, the PHA will:

Enter into a repayment agreement with the owner for the amount owed or

Restrict the owner from future participation.

G. WRITING OFF DEBTS

Debts will be written off if:

The debtor's whereabouts are unknown and the debt is more than 3 years old, or

A determination is made that the debtor is judgment-proof,

or the debtor is deceased.

Chapter 19

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

INTRODUCTION

The informal hearing requirements defined in HUD regulations are applicable to participating families who disagree with an action, decision, or inaction of the PHA (note that the terms "hearing" and "informal hearing" shall be used interchangeably throughout this chapter). This chapter describes the policies, procedures and standards to be used when families disagree with a PHA decision. The procedures and requirements for preference denial meetings, informal reviews and hearings are explained. It is the policy of the PHA to ensure that all families have the benefit of all protections due them under the law.

A. COMPLAINTS TO THE PHA

The PHA will respond promptly to complaints from families, owners, employees, and members of the public. All complaints will be documented. The PHA may require that complaints other than HQS violations/those concerning housing quality standards, or HQS be put in writing. HQS complaints may be reported by telephone.

Categories of Complaints

1. Complaints from families: if a family disagrees with an action or inaction of the PHA or owner.

   Complaints from families will be referred to the supervisor.

2. Complaints from owners: if an owner disagrees with an action or inaction of the PHA or a family.

   Complaints from owners will be referred to the supervisor.

3. Complaints from the general public: complaints or referrals from persons in the community with regard to the PHA, a family or an owner.

   Complaints from the general public will be referred to the supervisor.

The PHA (hearing/complaint) procedures will be provided to families in the briefing packet.

B. INFORMAL REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR APPLICANTS

[24 CFR 982.54(d)(12), 982.554]

Informal reviews are provided for applicants who are denied assistance before the effective date of the HAP contract. The exception is that when an applicant is denied assistance for citizen or eligible immigrant status, the applicant is entitled to an informal hearing.

When the PHA determines that an applicant is ineligible for the program, the family must be notified of their ineligibility in writing. The notice must contain:

- The reason(s) for which they are ineligible,

- The procedure for requesting an informal review if the applicant does not agree with the decision, and

- The time limit for requesting an informal review.

When denying admission due to engaging in criminal activity by a household member, the PHA will include in the notice a statement that the applicant may request a copy of the criminal record upon which the decision to deny admission was based.

The PHA must provide applicants with the opportunity for an informal review of decisions denying:

Listing on the PHA's waiting list,
Issuance of a voucher,
Participation in the program, or
Assistance under portability procedures.

Informal reviews are not required for established policies and procedures and PHA determinations such as:

1. Discretionary administrative determinations by the PHA,

2. General policy issues or class grievances,

3. A determination of the family unit size under the PHA subsidy standards,

4. Refusal to extend or suspend a voucher,

5. Disapproval of a lease,

6. Determination that a unit is not in compliance with HQS, or

7. Determination that a unit is not in accordance with HQS due to family size or composition.

Procedure for Informal Review

A request for an informal review must be received in writing by the close of the business day, no later than 14 days from the date of the PHA's notification of denial of assistance. The informal review will be scheduled within 30 days from the date the request is received and notice of such will be sent to the tenant a minimum of (14) days in advance of the hearing..

The informal review may not be conducted by the person who made or approved the decision under review, or by a subordinate of such person.

The informal review may be conducted by:

A staff person who is at the hearing officer or supervisor level or above, or
A qualified individual from outside the PHA.

The applicant will be given the option of presenting oral and/or written objections to the decision. Both the PHA and the family may present evidence and witnesses. The family may use an attorney or other representative to assist them at their own expense.

A notice of review findings will be provided in writing to the applicant within seven (7) days of/after the review. The notice shall include the decision of the review officer and an explanation of the reasons for the decision.

All requests for a review, supporting documentation, and a copy of the notice of review findings/final decision will be retained in the family's file.

C. INFORMAL HEARING PROCEDURES [24 CFR 982.555(a-f), 982.54(13)]

When the PHA makes a decision regarding the eligibility and the amount of assistance, applicants and participants must be notified in writing. The PHA will give the family prompt notice of such determinations, which will include:

The proposed action or decision of the PHA;
The date on which the proposed action or decision will take place;
The family's right to an explanation of the basis for the PHA's decision;
The procedure for requesting a hearing if the family disputes the action or decision;
The time limit for requesting the hearing;
To whom the hearing request should be addressed; and

When terminating assistance for engaging in criminal activity as shown by a criminal record, the

PHA will provide the subject of the record and the tenant/participant/head of household with a copy of the criminal record upon which the decision to terminate was based.
When denying admission for engaging in criminal activity as shown by a criminal record, the PHA will provide the subject of the record and the applicant with a copy of the criminal record upon which the decision to deny was based.

The PHA must provide participants with the opportunity for an informal hearing for decisions related to any of the following PHA determinations:

1. Determination of the family's annual or adjusted income and the computation of the housing assistance payment.

2. Appropriate utility allowance used from schedule

3. Family unit size determination under PHA subsidy standards.

4. Determination to terminate assistance for any reason.

5. Determination to terminate a family's FSS contract, withhold supportive services, or propose forfeiture of the family's escrow account.

The PHA must always provide the opportunity for an informal hearing before termination of assistance. As with informal reviews, the request for an informal hearing must be received in writing by the close of the business day no later than fourteen (14) days from the date of the PHA's notification of action. The informal review/hearing will be scheduled within thirty (30) days from the date the request is received.

Informal hearings are not required for established policies and procedures and PHA determinations such as:

1. Discretionary administrative determinations by the PHA

2. General policy issues or class grievances

3. Establishment of the PHA schedule of utility allowances for families in the program

4. A PHA determination not to approve an extension or suspension of a voucher term

5. A PHA determination not to approve a unit or lease

6. A PHA determination that an assisted unit is not in compliance with HQS (the PHA must provide an informal hearing for family breach of HQS because that is a family obligation determination)

7. A PHA determination that the unit is not in accordance with HQS because of the family size

8. A PHA determination either to exercise or not to exercise any right or remedy against the owner under a HAP contract

Notification of Hearing

It is the PHA's objective to resolve disputes at the lowest level possible and to make every effort to avoid the most severe remedies. However, if this is not possible, the PHA will ensure that applicants and participants will receive all of the protections and rights afforded by the law and the regulations.

The notification of hearing will contain:

1. The date and time of the hearing;

2. The location where the hearing will be held;

3. The detailed description of the violation(s) which should include the exact nature of the violation in detail. (I.E unreported income of $7500.00 from Wal-Mart from 1/08 thru 6/08) Also this notification will include reference to said violation in the administrative plan.

4. The family's right to bring evidence, witnesses, and legal or other representatives to the hearing at the family's expense;

5. The right to review any documents or evidence in the possession of the PHA upon which the PHA based the proposed action and, at the family's expense, to obtain a copy of such documents prior to the hearing. Requests for such documents or evidence must be received by no later than forty-eight (48) hours (excluding weekends and holidays) before the hearing date; and

6. A notice to the family that the PHA will request a copy of any documents or evidence the family will use at the hearing. Requests for such documents or evidence must be received by no later than forty-eight (48) hours (excluding weekends and holidays) before the hearing date.

7. The PHA will send the notice of hearing a minimum of (14) fourteen days in advance of the hearing.

The PHA's Hearing Procedures

After a hearing date is agreed upon, the family may request to re-schedule only upon showing "good cause," which is defined as an unavoidable conflict which seriously affects the health, safety or welfare of the family.

If a family does not appear at a scheduled hearing and has not re-scheduled the hearing in advance, the family must contact the PHA within forty-eight (48) hours (excluding weekends and holidays). The PHA will reschedule the hearing only if the family can show good cause for the failure to appear.

Families have the right to:

- Present written or oral objections to the PHA's determination;

- Examine the documents in the file which are the basis for the PHA's action, and all documents submitted to the hearing officer;

- Copy any relevant documents at their expense;

- Present any information or witnesses pertinent to the issues of the hearing;

- Request that PHA staff be available or present at the hearing to answer questions pertinent to the case; and

- Be represented by legal counsel, an advocate, or another designated representative at the family's own expense.

If the family requests copies of documents relevant to the hearing, the PHA will make the copies for the family and assess a charge of $0.10 per copy. In no case will the family be allowed to remove the file from the PHA's office.

In addition to other rights contained in this chapter, the PHA has a right to:

- Present evidence and any information pertinent to the issue of the hearing;

- Be notified if the family intends to be represented by legal counsel, an advocate, or another designated representative;

- Examine and copy any documents to be used by the family prior to the hearing;

- Have its attorney present; and

- Have staff persons and other witnesses familiar with the case present.

The informal hearing shall be conducted by the hearing officer appointed by the PHA who is neither the person who made or approved the decision, nor a subordinate of that person. The PHA appoints hearing officers who:

Are managers from other departments within the agency;

Are managers from other PHAs; or

Are professional mediators or arbitrators.

Required Evidence (Standard of Proof)

Preponderance of evidence is defined as evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence which as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is proven more probable than not. The intent is not to prove criminal liability, but to establish that the act(s) occurred. Preponderance of evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence.

Preparation by the PHA staff for the administrative fair hearing will include:

A. A narrative statement of facts for the hearing officer. The summary will include a synopsis of the events leading up to the adverse action as well as a listing of all exhibits that will be used to substantiate the allegations.
B. Evidence in support of the HA decision to terminate
C. Any witness(s) to corroborate the HA's position
D. Submission of all materials to the fair hearing officer as well as the appellant for review prior to the hearing within five days of the informal conference.

The hearing shall concern only the issues for which the family has received the opportunity for a hearing. Evidence presented at the hearing may be considered without regard to admissibility under the rules of evidence applicable to judicial proceedings.

No documents may be presented which have not been provided to the other party before the hearing *if these documents have been requested by the other party*. "Documents" includes records and regulations.

The hearing officer may ask the family for additional information and may adjourn the hearing, in order to reconvene at a later date, before reaching a decision.

If the family misses an appointment or deadline ordered by the hearing officer, the action of the PHA shall take effect and another hearing will not be granted.

The hearing officer will determine whether the action, inaction or decision of the PHA is legal in accordance with HUD regulations and this administrative plan, based upon the evidence and testimony provided at the hearing. Factual determinations relating to the individual circumstances of the family will be based on a preponderance of the evidence presented at the hearing.

A notice of hearing findings shall be provided in writing to the PHA and the family within seven (7) days and shall include:

- A clear summary of the decision and the reasons for the decision;

- If the decision involves money owed, the amount owed; and

- The date on which the decision goes into effect.

The PHA is not bound by hearing decisions of the following sort:

- those concerning matters for which the PHA is not required to provide an opportunity for a hearing;

- those which conflict with or contradict HUD regulations or requirements;

- those which conflict with or contradict federal, state or local laws; or

- those which exceed the authority of the person conducting the hearing.

The PHA shall send a letter to the participant within fourteen (14) days if it determines that the PHA is not bound by the hearing officer's determination. The letter shall include the PHA's reasons for the decision.

All requests for a hearing, supporting documentation, and a copy of the notice of hearing findings will be retained in the family's file.

* AN APPEAL OF THE HEARING DECISION MAY BE SUBMITTED BY THE TENANT IN WRITING NO LATER THAN FOURTEEN (14) DAYS FROM THE DATE OF THE HEARING DECISION. (Notice of such will be included in the termination notification.) APPEALS MUST BE SENT TO:

Manager-Housing Services Unit
25 Sigourney Street
Hartford, CT 06106

D. HEARING AND APPEAL PROVISIONS FOR "RESTRICTIONS ON ASSISTANCE TO NON-CITIZENS" [24 CFR Part 5, Subpart E]

Assistance to a family may not be terminated or denied while the PHA hearing is pending but assistance to an applicant may be delayed pending the PHA hearing.

INS Determination of Ineligibility

If a family member claims to be an eligible immigrant and the INS SAVE system and manual search do not verify the claim, the PHA notifies the applicant or participant within ten (10) days of their right to appeal to the INS within thirty (30) days of notification or to request an informal hearing with the PHA either in lieu of or subsequent to the INS appeal.

If the family appeals to the INS, they must give the PHA a copy of the appeal and proof of mailing or the PHA may proceed to deny or terminate. The time period to request an appeal may be extended by the PHA for good cause.

The request for an PHA hearing must be made within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the notice offering the hearing or, if an appeal was made to the INS, within fourteen (14) days of receipt of that notice.

After receipt of a request for an informal hearing, the hearing is conducted as described in section D of this chapter for both applicants and participants. If the hearing officer decides that the individual is not eligible, and there are no other eligible family members the PHA will either:

- Deny the applicant family, or

- Defer termination, if the family is a participant and qualifies for deferral, or

- Terminate participation, if the family does not qualify for deferral.

If there are eligible members in the family, the PHA will offer to pro-rate assistance or give the family the option to remove the ineligible member(s).

Regarding all other complaints related to eligible citizen/immigrant status:

- If any family member fails to provide documentation or certification as required by the regulation, that member is treated as ineligible. If all family members fail to provide documentation or certification, the family will be denied or terminated for failure to provide documentation.

- Participants whose termination is carried out after temporary deferral may not request a hearing since they had an opportunity for a hearing prior to the termination.

- Participants whose assistance is pro-rated (either based on their statement that some members are ineligible, or due to failure to verify eligible immigration status for some members after exercising their appeal and hearing rights described above) are entitled

to a hearing based on the right to a hearing regarding determinations of tenant rent and total tenant payment.

- Families denied or terminated for fraud in connection with the non-citizens rule are entitled to a review or hearing in the same way as terminations for any other type of fraud.

E. MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES FOR APPLICANTS/PARTICIPANTS WITH DISABILITIES [24 CFR 982.204, 982.552(c)]

When applicants are denied placement on the waiting list, or the PHA is terminating assistance, the presence of a disability may be considered as a mitigating circumstance during the informal review process.

Examples of mitigating circumstances are:

a) A person with a cognitive disorder may not have understood the requirement to report increases in income;
b) A person may not understand the need to make regular repayments on a promissory note;
c) Minor criminal records for public drunkenness may actually be due to medication reactions; or
d) Prior incarcerations for (being) disorderly conduct may be due to an emotional disorder.

Chapter 20
SPECIAL HOUSING TYPES
[24 CFR 982.601]

INTRODUCTION

The PHA will permit a family to lease a manufactured home and space with assistance under the program. The PHA will also provide assistance for a family that owns a manufactured home and leases only a space. In addition, the PHA will allow housing choice vouchers to be used in other special types of housing as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability.

MANUFACTURED HOMES

Housing Quality Standards [24 CFR 982.621]

A manufactured home must meet all the HQS requirements outlined in Chapter 10 of this administrative plan and regulated by 24 CFR 982.401. In addition, the manufactured home also must meet the following requirements:

A manufactured home must be placed on the site in a stable manner, and must be free from hazards such as susceptibility to sliding or wind damage.

A manufactured home must be securely anchored by a tie-down device that distributes and transfers the loads imposed by the unit to appropriate ground anchors to resist overturning or sliding due to the action of wind.

Manufactured Home Space Rental [24 CFR 982.622]

The rent to owner for a manufactured home space will include payment for maintenance services that the owner must provide to the tenant under the terms of the lease for the space.

The rent to owner does not include the cost of utilities and trash collection for the manufactured home. However, the owner may charge the family a separate fee for the cost of utilities or trash collection provided by the owner.

Reasonable Rent

During the assisted tenancy, the rent to owner for the manufactured home space may not exceed a reasonable rent as determined by the PHA.

The PHA will not approve a lease for a manufactured home space until the PHA has determined that the initial rent to owner for the space is a reasonable rent. At least annually during the assisted tenancy, the PHA will re-determine that the rent is reasonable. The PHA will determine whether the rent to owner for a manufactured home space is a reasonable rent in comparison to rents for other comparable manufactured home spaces. The PHA will consider the size and location of the space and any services and maintenance provided by the owner in accordance with the terms of the lease.

By accepting each monthly housing assistance payment from the PHA, the owner of the manufactured home space certifies that the rent to owner for the space is not more than rent charged by the owner for the unassisted rental of comparable spaces in the same manufactured home park or elsewhere. If requested by the PHA, the owner must provide the PHA with information on rents for other manufactured home space which the owner has available.

Housing Assistance Payments for Manufactured Home Space [24 CFR 982.623]

HAP for the Voucher

There is a separate FMR for a family renting a manufactured home space. The payment standard is used to calculate the monthly housing assistance payment for a family. The FMR for rental of a manufactured home space is generally forty per cent (40 %) of the published FMR for a two-bedroom unit.

Subsidy Calculation for the Voucher Program

During the term of a voucher tenancy, the amount of the monthly housing assistance payment for a family will equal the lesser of:

1. The payment standard minus the total tenant payment, or

2. The rent paid for rental of the real property on which the manufactured home owned by the family is located (i.e., the space rent) minus the total tenant payment.

The space rent is the sum of the following as determined by the PHA:

Rent to owner for the manufactured home space, and

Owner maintenance and management charges for the space, and

The utility allowance for tenant-paid utilities.

Amortization Cost

The amortization cost may include debt service to amortize costs (other than furniture costs) included in the purchase price of the manufactured home. The debt service includes the payment for principal and interest on the loan. The debt service amount will be reduced by 15 percent to

exclude debt service to amortize the cost of furniture, unless the PHA determines that furniture was not included in the purchase price.

Any debt service due to refinancing the manufactured home after purchase of the home is not included in the amortization costs.

The PHA will not approve as part of the monthly amortization payment any set-up charges to be included in the debt service incurred by a family that relocates its home.

The PHA will not include as part of the monthly amortization payment any set-up charges incurred before the family became an assisted family, if monthly payments are still being made to amortize such charges.

Utility Allowance Schedule for Manufactured Home Space Rental [24 CFR 982.624]

The PHA will establish utility allowances for manufactured home space rental. For the first twelve months of the initial lease term only, the allowances will include a reasonable amount for utility hook-up charges payable by the family, if the family actually incurs the expenses because of a move.

Allowances for utility hook-up charges do not apply to a family that leases a manufactured home space in place.

Utility allowances for manufactured home space will not be applied to cover the costs of digging a well or installation of a septic system.

SPECIAL HOUSING TYPES AS REASONABLE ACCOMODATION

In addition to manufactured housing, the PHA will allow housing choice vouchers to be used in the following types of housing as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability:

- **Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units**
  Defined at CFR 982.605 as a single room with access to a bathroom that contains at least 110 square feet of floor space.

- **Group homes**
  A group home must be licensed, certified or otherwise approved in writing by the state as a group home for elderly persons or persons with disabilities.

- **Congregate housing**
  Defined at CFR 982.609 as a single room or multiple rooms (e.g. sitting room). The unit must contain a refrigerator and there must be a central kitchen and dining facilities on the premises.

- **Shared housing**
  Defined at CFR 982.618, each unit must contain private space for each assisted family, plus appropriate common space for shared use by the residents of the unit. The private space for each family must contain at least one bedroom for each two persons in the family. The number of bedrooms in the private space of as assisted family may not be less than the family size. A zero or one bedroom unit may not be used for shared housing.

GLOSSARY

A. ACRONYMS USED IN SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

AAF	Annual Adjustment Factor. A factor published by HUD in the Federal Register which is used to compute annual rent adjustment.
ACC	Annual Contributions Contract
BR	Bedroom
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations. Commonly referred to as "the regulations". The CFR is the compilation of federal rules which are first published in the Federal Register and which define and implement a statute.
CPI	Consumer Price Index. The CPI is published monthly by the U.S. Department of Labor as an inflation indicator.
CR	Contract Rent
FDIC	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
FHA	Federal Housing Administration
FICA	Federal Insurance Contributions Act - Social Security taxes
FmHA	Farmers Home Administration
FMR	Fair Market Rent
FY	Fiscal Year
FYE	Fiscal Year End
GAO	Government Accounting Office
GR	Gross Rent
HAP	Housing Assistance Payment
HCDA	Housing and Community Development Act
HQS	Housing Quality Standards
HUD	The Department of Housing and Urban Development or its designee.
HURRA	Housing and Urban/Rural Recovery Act of 1983

IG	Inspector General
IGR	Independent Group Residence
IPA	Independent Public Accountant
IRA	Individual Retirement Account
MSA	A Metropolitan Statistical Area established by the U.S. Census Bureau
PHA	Public Housing Agency
PMSA	A Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area established by the U.S. Census Bureau
PS	Payment Standard
QC	Quality Control
RTA	Request for Tenancy Approval
RFP	Request for Proposals
RRP	Rental Rehabilitation Program
SMSA	Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area. Note: this term has been replaced by MSA, Metropolitan Statistical Area.
SRO	Single Room Occupancy
TR	Tenant Rent
TTP	Total Tenant Payment
UA	Utility Allowance
URP	Utility Reimbursement Payment

B. GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

1937 ACT. The United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437 et seq.).

ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN. The HUD-required written policy of the PHA governing its administration of the Section 8 tenant-based programs. The Administrative Plan and any revisions must be approved by the PHA's board and a copy submitted to HUD as a supporting document to the PHA Plan.

ABSORPTION. In portability, the point at which a receiving PHA stops billing the initial PHA for assistance on behalf of a family exercising portability. The receiving PHA uses funds available under its consolidated ACC.

ACC RESERVE ACCOUNT (formerly **PROJECT RESERVE).** Account established by HUD from amounts by which the maximum payment to the PHA under the consolidated ACC (during a PHA fiscal year) exceeds the amount actually approved and paid. This account is used as the source of additional payments for the program.

ADA. Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).

ADJUSTED INCOME. Annual income after all allowances approved by HUD have been deducted.

ADMINISTRATIVE FEE. Fee paid by HUD to the PHA for administration of the program.

ADMINISTRATIVE FEE RESERVE (formerly **OPERATING RESERVE).** Account established by PHA from excess administrative fee income. The administrative fee reserve must be used for housing purposes.

ADMISSION. The effective date of the first HAP contract for a family (i.e., the first day of the initial lease term) in a tenant-based program. This is the point when the family becomes a participant in the program.

ANNUAL BUDGET AUTHORITY. The maximum annual payment by HUD to a PHA for a funding increment.

ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS CONTRACT (or **ACC).** A written contract between HUD and a PHA. Under the contract HUD agrees to provide funding for the operation of the program, and the PHA agrees to comply with HUD requirements for the program.

ANNUAL INCOME. The anticipated total annual 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 (or **APPLICANT FAMILY).** A family that has applied for admission to a program, but is not yet a participant in the program.

ASSETS (see **NET FAMILY ASSETS).**

ASSISTED TENANT. A tenant who pays less than the market rent as defined in the regulations. Includes tenants receiving rent supplement, Rental Assistance Payments, or Section 8 assistance and all other 236 and 221 (d)(3) BMIR tenants, except those paying the 236 market rent or 120% of the BMIR rent, respectively.

BEDROOM.

BUDGET AUTHORITY. An amount authorized and appropriated by the U.S. Congress for payment to PHAs under the program. For each funding increment in a PHA program, budget

authority is the maximum amount that may be paid by HUD to the PHA over the ACC term of the funding increment.

CHILD CARE EXPENSES. Amounts paid by the family for the care of minors under 13 years of age where such care is necessary to enable a family member to be employed or for a household member to further his/her education.

CO-HEAD. An individual in the household who is equally responsible for the lease with the Head of Household. (A family never has a co-head and a spouse, and a co-head is never a dependent).

COMMON SPACE. In shared housing, the space available for use by the assisted family and other occupants of the unit.

CONGREGATE HOUSING. Housing for elderly persons or persons with disabilities that meets the HQS for congregate housing.

CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS CONTRACT (or **CONSOLIDATED ACC).** See 24 CFR 982.151.

CONTIGUOUS MSA. In portability, an MSA that shares a common boundary with the MSA in which the jurisdiction of the initial PHA is located.

CONTINUOUSLY ASSISTED. An applicant is continuously assisted under the 1937 Housing Act if the family is already receiving assistance under any 1937 Housing Act program when the family is admitted to the voucher program.

CONTRACT (see **HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS CONTRACT).**

CONTRACT RENT.

COOPERATIVE. Housing, including mutual housing, which 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 the 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.

DEPENDENT. A member of the family household (excluding foster children), other than the family head or spouse, who is under eighteen (18) years of age or is a disabled person or a handicapped person, or is a full-time student eighteen (18) years of age or older.

DISABILITY ASSISTANCE EXPENSE. Anticipated cost for care attendant(s) and auxiliary apparatus for disabled family members which enable a family member (including the disabled family member) to work.

DISABLED FAMILY. A family whose head, spouse, or sole member is a person with disabilities; or 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).**

DISPLACED PERSON (or **DISPLACED FAMILY).** A person or family 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 under federal disaster relief laws.

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 controlled substance, or the possession with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute or use a controlled substance, as defined in Section 102 of the Controlled Substance Act (21 U.S.C. 802).

DRUG TRAFFICKING. The illegal manufacture, sale, distribution or use of a controlled substance, or the possession with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute or use a controlled substance, as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802).

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 mental health treatment or treatment for drug abuse). 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, spouse, or sole member is a person who is at least 62 years of age; or 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 HOUSEHOLD. A family whose head or spouse or sole member is at least 62 years of age; may include two or more elderly persons living together; or one or more such persons living with another person who is determined to be essential to his/her care and well-being.

ELDERLY PERSON. A person who is at least 62 years old.

ELIGIBLE FAMILY (see **FAMILY**). A family is defined by the PHA in the administrative plan, which is approved by HUD.

EXCESS MEDICAL EXPENSES. Any medical expenses incurred by elderly or disabled families only in excess of 3% of Annual Income which are not reimbursable from any other source.

EXTREMELY LOW-INCOME FAMILY. A family whose annual income does not exceed 30 percent of the median income for the area, as determined by HUD, with adjustments for smaller and larger families. HUD may establish income ceilings higher or lower than 30% of medical income for an area if HUD finds such variations are necessary due to unusually high or low family incomes.

FAIR HOUSING ACT. Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended by the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.).

FAIR MARKET RENT (or **FMR**). The rent including the cost of utilities (except telephone) that would be required to be paid in the housing market area to obtain privately owned existing decent, safe and sanitary rental housing of modest (non-luxury) nature with suitable amenities. Fair market rents for existing housing are established by HUD for housing units of varying sizes (number of bedrooms) and are published in the *Federal Register.*

FAMILY. "Family" includes but is not limited to:

A family with or without children (the temporary absence of a child from the home due to

placement in foster care shall not be considered in determining family composition and family size);

An elderly family;

A near-elderly family;

A displaced family

The remaining member of a tenant family; and

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" can be further defined by the PHA).

FAMILY OF VETERAN OR SERVICE PERSON. A family is a "family of veteran or service person" when:

The veteran or service person (a) is either the head of household or is related to the head of the household; or (b) is deceased and was related to the head of the household, and was a family member at the time of death.

The veteran or service person, unless deceased, is living with the family or is only temporarily absent unless s/he was (a) formerly the head of the household and is permanently absent because of hospitalization, separation, or desertion, or is divorced; provided, the family contains one or more persons for whose support s/he is legally responsible and the spouse has not remarried; or (b) not the head of the household but is permanently hospitalized; provided, that s/he was a family member at the time of hospitalization and there remain in the family at least two related persons.

FAMILY RENT TO OWNER. In the voucher program, the portion of the rent to owner paid by the family.

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM (or **FSS PROGRAM).** The program established by a PHA to promote self-sufficiency of assisted families, including the provision of supportive services.

FAMILY SHARE. The amount calculated by subtracting the housing assistance payment from the gross rent.

FAMILY UNIT SIZE. The appropriate number of bedrooms for a family, as determined by the PHA under the PHA's subsidy standards.

FMR/EXCEPTION RENT. The fair market rent published by HUD headquarters. In the pre-merger certificate program the initial contract rent for a dwelling unit plus any utility allowance could not exceed the FMR/exception rent limit (for the dwelling unit or for the family unit size). In the voucher program the PHA adopts a payment standard schedule that is within 90% to 110% of the FMR for each bedroom size.

FOSTER CHILD CARE PAYMENT. 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).

FUNDING INCREMENT. Each commitment of budget authority by HUD to a PHA under the consolidated annual contributions contract for the PHA program.

GROSS RENT. The sum of the Rent to Owner and the utility allowance. If there is no utility allowance, Rent to Owner equals Gross Rent.

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 or aides).

HAP CONTRACT (see **HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS CONTRACT).**

HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD. The head of household is the person who assumes legal and financial responsibility for the household and is listed on the application as the head.

HOUSING AGENCY (or **HA;** see **PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY).** A state, county, municipality or other governmental entity or public body (or agency or instrumentality thereof) authorized to engage in or assist in the development or operation of low-income housing. (Note: **PHA** and **HA** mean the same thing.)

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1974. The act in which the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 (sometimes referred to as the Act) was recodified, and which added the Section 8 Programs.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT (or **HAP).** The monthly assistance payment by a PHA. The total assistance payment consists of:

A payment to the owner for rent to owner under the family's lease.

An additional payment to the family if the total assistance payment exceeds the rent to owner. The additional payment is called a "utility reimbursement" payment.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS CONTRACT (or **HAP CONTRACT).** A written contract between a PHA and an owner in the form prescribed by HUD headquarters, in which the PHA agrees to make housing assistance payments to the owner on behalf of an eligible family.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PLAN. (1) A Housing Assistance Plan submitted by a local government participating in the Community Development Block Program as part of the block grant application, in accordance with the requirements of 570.303(c) submitted by a local government not participating in the Community Development Block Grant Program and approved by HUD. (2) A Housing Assistance Plan meeting the requirements of 570.303(c) submitted by a local government not participating in the Community Development Block Grant Program and approved by HUD.

HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (or **HQS).** The minimum housing quality standards established by HUD for housing assisted under the tenant-based programs.

HUD. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

HUD REQUIREMENTS. HUD requirements for the Section 8 programs. HUD requirements are issued by HUD headquarters as regulations, Federal Register notices or other binding program directives.

IMPUTED ASSET. Asset disposed of for less than fair market value during two years preceding examination or re-examination.

IMPUTED INCOME. The passbook interest rate established by HUD, multiplied by the total cash value of assets; this calculation is used when 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 which is included in the

family's annual income and therefore reflected in the family's rental contribution.

INCOME. Income from all sources for each member of the household, as determined in accordance with criteria established by HUD.

INCOME FOR ELIGIBILITY. Annual Income.

INITIAL PHA. In portability, the term refers to both:

The PHA that originally selected a family that later decides to move out of the jurisdiction of the selecting PHA; and

The PHA that absorbed a family that later decides to move out of the jurisdiction of the absorbing PHA.

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.

INTEREST REDUCTION SUBSIDIES. The monthly payments or discounts made by HUD to reduce the debt service payments and, hence, rents required on Section 236 and 221 (d)(3) BMIR projects; this includes monthly interest reduction payments made to mortgagees of Section 236 projects and front-end loan discounts paid on BMIR projects.

JURISDICTION. The area in which the PHA has authority under state and local law to administer the program.

LANDLORD. This term means either the owner of the property or his or her representative or the managing agent or his or 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 PHA. In cooperative housing, a written agreement between a cooperative and a member of the cooperative. The agreement establishes the conditions for occupancy of the member's family with housing assistance payments to the cooperative under a HAP contract between the cooperative and the PHA.

LIVE-IN AIDE. A person who resides with an elderly person or disabled person and who is determined to be essential to the care and well-being of the person, is not obligated for the support of the person, and would not be living in the unit except to provide necessary supportive services.

LOCAL PREFERENCE. A preference used by the PHA to select among applicant families.

LOW-INCOME FAMILY. A family whose annual income does not exceed 80 percent of the median income for the area, as determined by HUD, with adjustments for smaller and larger families. HUD may establish income ceilings higher or lower than 80% for areas with unusually high- or low-income families.

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

MARKET RENT. The rent HUD authorizes the owner of **FHA insured/subsidized** multi-family housing to collect from families ineligible for assistance. For unsubsidized units in an FHA-insured multi-family project in which a portion of the total units receive project-based rental assistance, under the Rental Supplement or Section 202/Section 8 Programs, the **Market Rate Rent** is that rent approved by HUD and is the Contract Rent for a Section 8 **certificate holder**. For BMIR units, **Market Rent** varies by whether the project is a rental or cooperative.

MEDICAL EXPENSES. Those total 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% of annual income.

MERGER DATE. October 1, 1999.

MINOR. A member of the family household (excluding foster children), other than the family head or spouse, who is under eighteen (18) years of age.

MIXED FAMILY. A family **with citizens and eligible immigration status and without citizens and eligible immigration status** as defined in 24 CFR 5.504(b)(3)

MONTHLY ADJUSTED INCOME. One-twelfth (1/12, or 8.5%) of the annual adjusted income (i.e., one-twelfth of the income after allowances have been applied).

MONTHLY INCOME. One-twelfth (1/12, or 8.5%) of the annual income.

MUTUAL HOUSING (see **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.

NEGATIVE RENT. Now called Utility Reimbursement. A negative Tenant Rent results in a Utility Reimbursement Payment (URP).

NET FAMILY ASSETS. Value of equity in savings, checking, IRA and Keogh accounts, real property, stocks, bonds, and other forms of capital investment. The value of necessary items of personal property such as furniture and automobiles is excluded from the definition.

NON-CITIZEN. A person who is neither a citizen nor a national of the United States.

OCCUPANCY STANDARDS (see **SUBSIDY STANDARDS).** Standards established by a PHA to determine the appropriate number of bedrooms for families of different sizes and compositions.

OWNER. Any persons or entity having the legal right to lease or sublease a unit to a participant.

PARTICIPANT. A family that has been admitted to the PHA's 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 PHA 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. A person who has a disability as defined in 42 U.S.C 423 or a developmental disability as defined in 42 U.S.C. 6001. Also includes a person who is determined, under HUD regulations, to have a physical or mental impairment that is expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration, substantially impedes the ability to live independently, and is of such a nature that the ability to live independently could be improved by more suitable housing conditions. For purposes of reasonable accommodation and program accessibility for persons with disabilities, means an "individual with handicaps" as defined in 24 CFR 8.3. Definition does not exclude persons who have AIDS or conditions arising from AIDS, but does not include a person whose disability is based solely on drug or alcohol dependence (for low-income housing eligibility purposes).

PHA PLAN. The annual plan and the 5-year plan as adopted by the PHA and approved by HUD in accordance with part 903 of this chapter.

PORTABILITY. Renting a dwelling unit with Section 8 tenant-based assistance outside the jurisdiction of the initial PHA.

PREMISES. The building or complex in which the dwelling unit is located, including common areas and grounds.

PRIVATE SPACE. In shared housing: The portion of a contract unit that is for the exclusive use of an assisted family.

PROCESSING ENTITY. Entity responsible for making eligibility determinations and for income reexaminations. In the Section 8 Program, the "processing entity" is the "responsible entity."

PROGRAM. The Section 8 tenant-based assistance program under 24 CFR Part 982.

PROGRAM RECEIPTS. HUD payments to the PHA under the consolidated ACC, and any other amounts received by the PHA in connection with the program.

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 (or **PHA;** see **HOUSING AGENCY;** Note: **PHA** and **HA** mean the same thing). PHA includes any state, county, municipality or other governmental entity or public body which is authorized to administer the program (or an agency or instrumentality of such an entity), or any of the following:

A consortia of housing agencies, each of which meets the qualifications in paragraph (1) of this definition, that HUD determines has the capacity and capability to efficiently administer the program (in which case, HUD may enter into a consolidated ACC with any legal entity authorized to act as the legal representative of the consortia members):

Any other public or private non-profit entity that was administering a Section 8 tenant-based assistance program pursuant to a contract with the contract administrator of such program (HUD or a PHA) on October 21, 1998; or

For any area outside the jurisdiction of a PHA that is administering a tenant-based program, or where HUD determines that such PHA is not administering the program effectively, a private non-profit entity or a governmental entity or public body that would otherwise lack jurisdiction to administer the program in such area.

REASONABLE RENT. A rent to owner that is not more than rent charged for comparable units in the private unassisted market, and not more than the rent charged for comparable unassisted units in the premises.

RECEIVING PHA. In portability: A PHA that receives a family selected for participation in the tenant-based program of another PHA. The receiving PHA issues a voucher and provides program assistance to the family.

RE-EXAMINATION (formerly **RECERTIFICATION).** The process of securing documentation of total family income used to determine the rent that the tenant will pay for the next 12 months if there are no additional changes to be reported. There are annual and interim re-examinations.

REMAINING MEMBER OF TENANT FAMILY. Person left in assisted housing after other family members have left and become unassisted.

RENT TO OWNER. The total monthly rent payable to the owner under the lease for the unit. Rent to owner covers payment for any housing services, maintenance and utilities that the owner is required to provide and pay for.

RESIDENCY PREFERENCE. A PHA 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 ("residency preference area").

RESIDENCY PREFERENCE AREA. The specified area where families must reside to qualify for a residency preference.

RESIDENT ASSISTANT. A person who lives in an Independent Group Residence and provides on a daily basis some or all of the necessary services to elderly, handicapped, and disabled individuals receiving Section 8 housing assistance and who is essential to these individuals' care or wellbeing. A Resident Assistant shall not be related by blood, marriage or operation of law to individuals receiving Section 8 assistance nor contribute to a portion of his/her income or resources towards the expenses of these individuals.

RESPONSIBLE ENTITY. For the public housing and Section 8 tenant-based assistance, project-based certificate assistance and moderate rehabilitation program, the responsible entity means the PHA 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 (42 U.S.C. 1437f).

SECURITY DEPOSIT. A dollar amount which can be applied to unpaid rent, damages or other amounts to the owner under the lease.

SERVICE PERSON. A person in the active military or naval service (including the active reserve) of the United States.

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.

SINGLE PERSON. A person living alone or intending to live alone.

SPECIAL ADMISSION. Admission of an applicant that is not on the PHA waiting list or without considering the applicant's waiting list position.

SPECIAL HOUSING TYPES. See Subpart M of 24 CFR 982, which 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 husband or wife of the head of the household.

SUBSIDIZED PROJECT. A multi-family housing project (with the exception of a project owned by a cooperative housing mortgage corporation or association) which receives the benefit of subsidy in the form of:

Below-market interest rates pursuant to Section 221(d)(3) and (5) or interest reduction payments pursuant to Section 236 of the National Housing Act; or

Rent supplement payments under Section 101 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965; or

Direct loans pursuant to Section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959; or

Payments under the Section 23 Housing Assistance Payments Program pursuant to Section 23 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 prior to amendment by the Housing

and Community Development Act of 1974;

Payments under the Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments Program pursuant to Section 8 of the United States Housing Act after amendment by the Housing and Community Development Act unless the project is owned by a Public Housing Agency;

A Public Housing Project.

SUBSIDY STANDARDS (see **OCCUPANCY STANDARDS).** Standards established by a PHA to determine the appropriate number of bedrooms and amount of subsidy for families of different sizes and compositions.

SUSPENSION/TOLLING. Stopping the clock on the term of a family's voucher, for such period as determined by the PHA, from the time when the family submits a request for PHA approval to lease a unit, until the time when the PHA approves or denies the request. If the PHA decides to allow extensions or suspensions of the voucher term, the PHA administrative plan must describe how the PHA determines whether to grant extensions or suspensions, and how the PHA determines the length of any extension or suspension.

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 execute(s) the lease as lessee of the dwelling unit.

TENANT RENT. The amount payable monthly by the family as rent to the unit owner.

TOTAL TENANT PAYMENT (TTP). The total amount the HUD rent formula requires the tenant to pay toward gross rent and utility allowance.

UNIT. Residential space for the private use of a family.

UNUSUAL EXPENSES. Prior to the change in the 1982 regulations, this was the term applied to the amounts paid by the family for the care of minors under 13 years of age or for the care of disabled or handicapped family household members, but only where such care was necessary to enable a family member to be gainfully employed.

UTILITIES. Utilities means water, electricity, gas, other heating, refrigeration, cooking fuels, trash collection and sewage services. Telephone service is not included as a utility.

UTILITY ALLOWANCE. If the cost of utilities (except telephone) including range and refrigerator, and other housing services for an assisted unit is not included in the Contract Rent but is the responsibility of the family occupying the unit, an amount equal to the estimate made or approved by a PHA or HUD 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 healthy living environment.

UTILITY REIMBURSEMENT. In the voucher program, the portion of the housing assistance payment which exceeds the amount of the rent to owner.

UTILITY REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENT. In the pre-merger certificate program, the amount, if any, by which the utility allowance for the unit, if applicable, exceeds the total tenant payment for the family occupying the unit.

VACANCY LOSS PAYMENTS. (For pre-merger certificate contracts effective prior to 10/2/95) When a family vacates its unit in violation of its lease, the owner is eligible for 80% of the contract rent for a vacancy period of up to one additional month (beyond the month in which

the vacancy occurred) if s/he notifies the PHA as soon as s/he learns of the vacancy, makes an effort to advertise the unit, and does not reject any eligible applicant except for good cause.

VERY LOW-INCOME FAMILY. A lower-income family whose annual income does not exceed 50% 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% 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 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.

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. A document issued by a PHA to a family selected for admission to the housing choice voucher program. This document describes the program and the procedures for PHA approval of a rental unit selected by the family. The voucher also states the obligations of the family under the housing choice voucher 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 PHA policy who are waiting for subsidy to become available.

WAITING LIST ADMISSION. An admission from the PHA 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.

C. GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THE NON-CITIZENS RULE

CHILD. A member of the family other than the family head or spouse who is under 18 years of age.

CITIZEN. A citizen **or *(a)* national** of the United States.

EVIDENCE OF CITIZENSHIP OR ELIGIBLE STATUS. The documents which must be submitted **to evidence** citizenship or eligible immigration status.

HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD. The adult member of the family who is the head of the household for the purpose of determining income eligibility and rent.

HUD. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

INS. The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

MIXED FAMILY. A family whose members include those with citizenship or eligible immigration status and those without citizenship or eligible immigration status.

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.

NON-CITIZEN. A person who is neither a citizen nor a national of the United States.

PHA. A housing authority which operates public housing.

RESPONSIBLE ENTITY. The person or entity responsible for administering the restrictions on providing assistance to non-citizens with ineligible immigration status (***i.e., or e.g.,*** the PHA).

SECTION 214. Section 214 restricts HUD from making financial assistance available for non-citizens unless they meet one of the categories of eligible immigration status specified in Section 214 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1980, as amended (42 U.S.C. 1436a).

SPOUSE. Spouse refers to the marriage partner, either a husband or wife, who is the person whom one would need to divorce in order to dissolve the relationship. It includes the partner in a common-law marriage. It does not cover boyfriends, girlfriends, significant others, or "co-heads." "Co-head" is a term recognized by some HUD programs, but not by public and Indian housing programs.

PROGRAM INTEGRITY ADDENDUM
[24 CFR 792.101 to 792.204, 982.54]

INTRODUCTION

The US Department of HUD conservatively estimates that 600 million dollars is paid annually to program participants who falsify or omit material facts in order to gain more rental assistance than they are entitled to under the law. HUD further estimates that 12% of all HUD-assisted families are either totally ineligible, or are receiving benefits which exceed their legal entitlement.

The PHA is committed to assuring that the proper level of benefits is paid to all participating families and that housing resources reach only income-eligible families so that program integrity can be maintained.

The PHA will take all steps necessary to prevent fraud, waste, and mismanagement so that program resources are utilized judiciously.

This Chapter outlines the PHA's policies for the prevention, detection, and investigation of program abuse and fraud.

Consideration of Remedies

In the case of family-caused errors or program abuse, the PHA will take into consideration (1) the seriousness of the offense and the extent of participation or culpability of individual family members, (2) and special circumstances surrounding the case, (3) any mitigating circumstances related to the disability of a family member, (4) the effects of the particular remedy on family members who were not involved in the offense.

In the case of owner-caused errors or program abuse, the PHA 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 are not involved in the offense.

A. CRITERIA FOR INVESTIGATION OF SUSPECTED ABUSE AND FRAUD

Under no circumstances will the PHA undertake an inquiry or an audit of a participating family arbitrarily. The PHA's expectation is that participating families will comply with HUD requirements, provisions of the voucher, and other program rules. The PHA staff will make every effort (formally and informally) to orient and educate all families in order to avoid unintentional violations. However, the PHA has a responsibility to HUD, to the community, and to eligible families in need of housing assistance to monitor participants and owners for compliance and, when indicators of possible abuse come to the PHA' s attention, to investigate such claims.

The PHA will initiate an investigation of a participating family only in the event of one or more of the following circumstances:

1. **Referrals, Complaints, or Tips.** The PHA will follow up on referrals received by mail, by telephone, or in person from other agencies, companies or persons which allege that a family is in non-compliance with, or otherwise violating the family obligations or any other program rules. Such follow-up will be made providing that the referral contains at least one item of information that is independently verifiable. A copy of the allegation will be retained in the family's file.

2. **Internal File Review.** A follow-up will be made if PHA staff discovers (as a function of a certification or recertification, an interim redetermination, or a quality control review), information or facts that conflict with previous file data, the PHA's knowledge of the family, or statements made by the family.

3. **Verification of Documentation.** A follow-up will be made if the PHA receives independent verification or documentation that conflicts with representations in the family's file (such as public record information or reports from credit bureau or other agencies).

B. STEPS THE PHA WILL TAKE TO PREVENT PROGRAM ABUSE AND FRAUD

The PHA management and staff will utilize various methods and practices (listed below) to prevent program abuse, non-compliance, and willful violations of program rules by applicants and participating families. This policy objective is to establish confidence and trust in the management by emphasizing education as the primary means to obtain compliance by families.

Things You Should Know (HUD-1140-OIG). This program integrity bulletin (created by HUD's inspector general) will be furnished and explained to all applicants to promote understanding of program rules, and to clarify the PHA's expectations for cooperation and compliance.

Program Orientation Session. Mandatory orientation sessions will be conducted by the

PHA staff for all prospective program participants, either prior to or upon issuance of a voucher. At the conclusion of all program orientation Sessions, the family representative will be required to sign a "program briefing certificate" to confirm that all rules and pertinent regulations were explained to them.

Resident Counseling. The PHA will routinely provide participant counseling as a part of every recertification interview in order to clarify any confusion pertaining to program rules and requirements.

Review and Explanation of Forms. Staff will explain all required forms and review the contents of all (re)certification documents prior to signature.

Use of Instructive Signs and Warnings. Instructive signs will be conspicuously posted in common areas and interview areas to reinforce compliance with program rules and to warn about penalties for fraud and abuse

Participant Certification. All family representatives will be required to sign a participant certification form.

C. STEPS THE PHA WILL TAKE TO DETECT PROGRAM ABUSE AND FRAUD

The PHA staff will maintain a high level of awareness to indicators of possible abuse and fraud by assisted families.

Quality Control File Reviews. Prior to initial certification, and at the completion of all subsequent recertifications, five (5%) of the participant file will be reviewed. Such reviews shall include, but are not limited to:

Assurance that verification of all income and deductions is present.
Changes in reported Social Security Numbers or dates of birth.
Authenticity of file documents.
Ratio between reported income and expenditures.
Review of signatures for consistency with previously signed file documents.
All forms are correctly dated and signed.

Observation. The PHA management and occupancy staff (to include inspection personnel) will maintain high awareness of circumstances which may indicate program abuse or fraud, such as unauthorized persons residing in the household and unreported income.

Observations will be documented in the family's file.

Public Record Bulletins may be reviewed by management and staff.

State Wage Data Record Keepers. Inquiries to state wage and employment record keeping agencies as authorized under Public Law 100-628, the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments Act of 1988, may be made annually in order to detect unreported wages or unemployment compensation benefits

Credit Bureau Inquiries. Credit bureau inquiries may be made (with proper authorization by the participant) in the following circumstances:

- At the time of final eligibility determination
- When an allegation is received by the PHA wherein unreported income sources are disclosed

D. THE PHA'S HANDLING OF ALLEGATIONS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE AND FRAUD

The PHA staff will encourage all participating families to report suspected abuse to the Housing Director. All such referrals, as well as referrals from community members and other agencies, will be thoroughly documented and placed in the participant's file. All allegations, complaints and tips will be carefully evaluated in order to determine if they warrant follow-up. The Housing Director will not follow up on allegations which are vague or otherwise non-specific. They will only review allegations which contain one or more independently verifiable facts.

File Review. An internal file review will be conducted to determine whether the subject of the allegation is a client of the PHA and, if so, to determine whether or not the information reported has been previously disclosed by the family.

The PHA will then determine whether it is the most appropriate authority to do a follow-up (more so than police or social services). Any file documentation of past behavior as well as corroborating complaints will be evaluated.

Conclusion of Preliminary Review. If at the conclusion of the preliminary file review there are facts contained in the allegation that conflict with file data, and the fact(s) are independently verifiable, the supervisor will initiate an investigation to determine if the allegation is true or false.

E. OVERPAYMENTS TO OWNERS

If the landlord has been overpaid as a result of fraud, misrepresentation or violation of the HAP contract, the PHA may terminate the contract and arrange for restitution to the PHA and/or family as appropriate.

The PHA will make every effort to recover any overpayments made as a result of landlord fraud or abuse. Payments otherwise due to the owner may be debited in order to repay the PHA or the tenant, as applicable.

F. HOW THE PHA WILL INVESTIGATE ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AND FRAUD

If the PHA determines that an allegation or referral warrants follow-up, either the staff person who is responsible for the file, or a person designated by the executive director to monitor the program compliance will conduct the investigation. The steps taken will depend upon the nature of the allegation and may include, but are not limited to, the items listed below. In all cases, the PHA will secure the written authorization from the program participant for the release of information.

Credit Bureau Inquiries. In cases involving previously unreported income sources, a credit bureau inquiry may be made to determine if there is financial activity that conflicts with the reported income of the family.

Verification of Credit. In cases where the financial activity conflicts with file data, a *Verification of Credit* form may be mailed to the creditor in order to determine the unreported income source.

Employers and Ex-Employers. Employers or ex-employers may be contacted to verify wages which may have been previously undisclosed or misreported.

Neighbors/Witnesses. Neighbors and/or other witnesses may be interviewed who are believed to have direct or indirect knowledge of facts pertaining to the PHA's review may be interviewed.

Other Agencies. Investigators, case workers or representatives of other benefit agencies may be contacted.

Public Records. If relevant, the PHA will review public records kept in any jurisdictional courthouse. Examples of public records which may be checked are: real estate records, marriage and divorce records, uniform commercial code financing statements, voter registration rolls, judgments, court or police records, state wage records, utility records and postal records.

Interviews with Head of Household or Family Members. The PHA will discuss the allegation (or details thereof) with the head of household or family member by scheduling an appointment at the appropriate PHA office. A high standard of courtesy and professionalism will be maintained by the PHA staff person who conducts such interviews. Under no circumstances will inflammatory language, accusation, or any unprofessional conduct or language be tolerated by the management. If possible, an additional staff person will attend such interviews.

G. PLACEMENT OF DOCUMENTS, EVIDENCE AND STATEMENTS OBTAINED BY THE PHA

Documents and other evidence obtained by the PHA during the course of an investigation will be considered "work product" and will either be kept in the participant's file, or in a separate "work file." In either case, the participant's file or work file shall be kept in a locked file cabinet. Such cases under review will not be discussed among PHA staff who are involved in the process, or have information which may assist in the investigation.

H. CONCLUSION OF THE PHA'S INVESTIGATIVE REVIEW

At the conclusion of the investigative review, the reviewer will report the findings to the executive director or designee. It will then be determined whether the facts are inconclusive and if so, whether a violation has or has not occurred.

I. EVALUATION OF THE FINDINGS

If it is determined that a program violation has occurred, the PHA will review the facts to determine:

What type of violation has occurred (procedural, non-compliance, fraud)

Whether the violation was intentional or unintentional.

What amount of money (if any) is owed by the family.

If the family is eligible for continued occupancy.

J. ACTION PROCEDURES FOR VIOLATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN DOCUMENTED

Once a program violation has been documented, the PHA will propose the most appropriate remedy based upon the type and severity of the violation.

1. **Procedural Non-compliance.** This category applies when the family "fails to" observe a procedure or requirement of the PHA , but does not misrepresent a material fact, and there is no retroactive assistance payments owed by the family.

   Examples of non-compliance violations are:

   Failure to appear at a pre-scheduled appointment.
   Failure to return verification in time period specified by the PHA.

   (a) **Warning Notice to the Family.** In such cases a notice will be sent to the family which contains the following:

   A description of the non-compliance and the procedure, policy or obligation which was violated.

   The date by which the violation must be corrected, or the procedure complied with.

   The action that will be taken by the PHA if the procedure or obligation is not complied with by the date specified by the PHA.

   The consequences of repeated (similar) violations.

2. **Procedural Non-compliance - Overpaid Assistance.** When the family owes money to the PHA for failure to report changes in income or assets, the PHA will issue a notification of overpayment of assistance. This notice will contain the following:

   - A description of the violation and the date(s).

   - Any amounts owed to the PHA .

   - Notification of a 10 day response period.

   - Acknowledgement of the family's right to disagree and to request an informal hearing with instructions for the request of such hearing.

(a) Participant Fails to Comply with PHA's Notice. If the Participant fails to comply with the PHA's notice, and a family obligation has been violated, the PHA will initiate termination of assistance.

(b) Participant Complies with PHA's Notice. When a family complies the PHA's notice, the staff person responsible will meet with him/her to discuss and explain the family obligation or program rule which was violated. The staff person will complete a participant counseling report, give one copy to the family and retain a copy in the family's file.

3. **Intentional Misrepresentations.** When a participant falsifies, misstates, omits or otherwise misrepresents a material fact which results (or would have resulted) in an overpayment of housing assistance by the PHA, the PHA will evaluate whether or not:

- The participant had knowledge that his/her actions were wrong, and

- The participant willfully violated the family obligations or the law.

Knowledge. This will be evaluated by determining if the participant was made aware of program requirements and prohibitions. The participant's signature on various certifications, briefing certificate, personal declaration and are adequate to establish knowledge of wrong-doing.

Willful Intent. Any of the following circumstances will be considered adequate to demonstrate willful intent:

(a) An admission by the participant of the misrepresentation.

(b) Repetition of the misrepresentation.

(c) Using a false name or Social Security Number.

(d) Admissions of the illegal action or omission by the participant to others.

(e) Omission of material facts known to the participant (e.g., employment of the participant or other household member).

(f) Falsification, forgery or altering documents.

(g) Uttering and certifying to statements at a interim (re)determination which were later independently verified to be false.

4. **Dispositions of Cases Involving Misrepresentations**. In all cases of misrepresentations involving efforts to recover monies owed, the PHA may pursue, depending upon its evaluation of the criteria stated above, one or more of the following actions:

(a) Criminal Prosecution: If the PHA has established criminal intent, and the case meets the criteria for prosecution, the PHA will:

Refer the case to the local State or District Attorney, notify HUD's RIGI, and terminate rental assistance.

(b) Administrative Remedies: The PHA will at its discretion:

Terminate assistance and demand payment of restitution in full.

Terminate assistance and execute an administrative repayment agreement in accordance with the PHA's Repayment Policy.

Terminate assistance and pursue restitution through civil litigation.