OHFA

OKLAHOMA HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY

ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM

November 19, 2025

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

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Chapter 1

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM AND PLAN

INTRODUCTION

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

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

There are three parts to this chapter:

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

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

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

PART I: THE PHA

1-I.A. OVERVIEW

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

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

The Section 8 tenant-based Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) assistance program is funded by the federal government and administered by the **Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA)** for the jurisdiction of **the state of Oklahoma**.

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

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

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

1-I.C. PHA MISSION

The purpose of a mission statement is to communicate the purpose of the agency to people inside and outside of the agency. It provides guiding direction for developing strategy, defining critical success factors, searching out key opportunities, making resource allocation choices, satisfying clients and stakeholders, and making decisions.

> **The mission of Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency is creating housing solutions for Oklahomans.**

1-I.D. THE PHA'S PROGRAMS

The following programs are included under this administrative plan:

Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency's (OHFA) administrative plan is applicable to the operation of the Housing Choice Voucher and Homeownership programs.

1-I.E. THE PHA'S COMMITMENT TO ETHICS AND SERVICE

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

- Administer applicable federal and state laws and regulations to achieve high ratings in compliance measurement indicators while maintaining efficiency in program operation to ensure fair and consistent treatment of clients served.
- Provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing – in compliance with program housing quality standards – for very low-income families while ensuring that family rents are fair, reasonable, and affordable.
- Encourage self-sufficiency of participant families and assist in the expansion of family opportunities that address educational, socio-economic, recreational and other human services needs.
- Promote fair housing and the opportunity for very low-income families of all ethnic backgrounds to experience freedom of housing choice.
- Promote a housing program that maintains quality service and integrity while providing an incentive to private property owners to rent to very low-income families.
- Promote a market-driven housing program that will help qualified low-income families be successful in obtaining affordable housing and increase the supply of housing choices for such families.
- Promote and encourage homeownership for low-income families participating in the Housing Choice Voucher Program.
- Create positive public awareness and expand the level of family, owner, and community support in accomplishing OHFA's mission.
- Attain and maintain a high level of standards and professionalism in day-to-day management of all program components.
- Administer an efficient, high-performing agency through continuous improvement of OHFA's support systems and commitment to our employees and their development.

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

PART II: THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

However, the Voucher program permitted families more options in housing selection. Rental housing still had to meet the basic housing quality standards, but there was no fair market rent limitation on rent. In addition, family contribution to rent was not set at a limit of 30 percent of

adjusted income. Consequently, depending on the actual rental cost of the unit selected, a family might pay more or less than 30 percent of their adjusted income for rent.

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

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

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

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

On July 29, 2016, the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016 (HOTMA) was signed into law. HOTMA made numerous changes to statutes governing HUD programs, including sections of the United States Housing Act of 1937. Title I of HOTMA contains 14 different sections that impact the public housing and Section 8 programs.

- The Final Rule implementing broad changes to income and assets in Sections 102 and 104 of HOTMA, and for PHAs that administer the public housing program over-income provisions in Section 103, was officially published in the *Federal Register* on February 14, 2023. On September 29, 2023, HUD issued notice PIH 2023-27, which provided guidance to PHAs on the implementation of the program changes described in the Final Rule. HUD issued a revised version of the notice on February 2, 2024.
- The Final Rule implementing streamlining changes to the HCV and PBV programs was published on May 7, 2024, and codified certain provisions in Sections 101, 105, 106, and 112 of HOTMA as well as incorporating changes from the NSPIRE final rule.

1-II.B. HCV PROGRAM BASICS

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

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

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

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

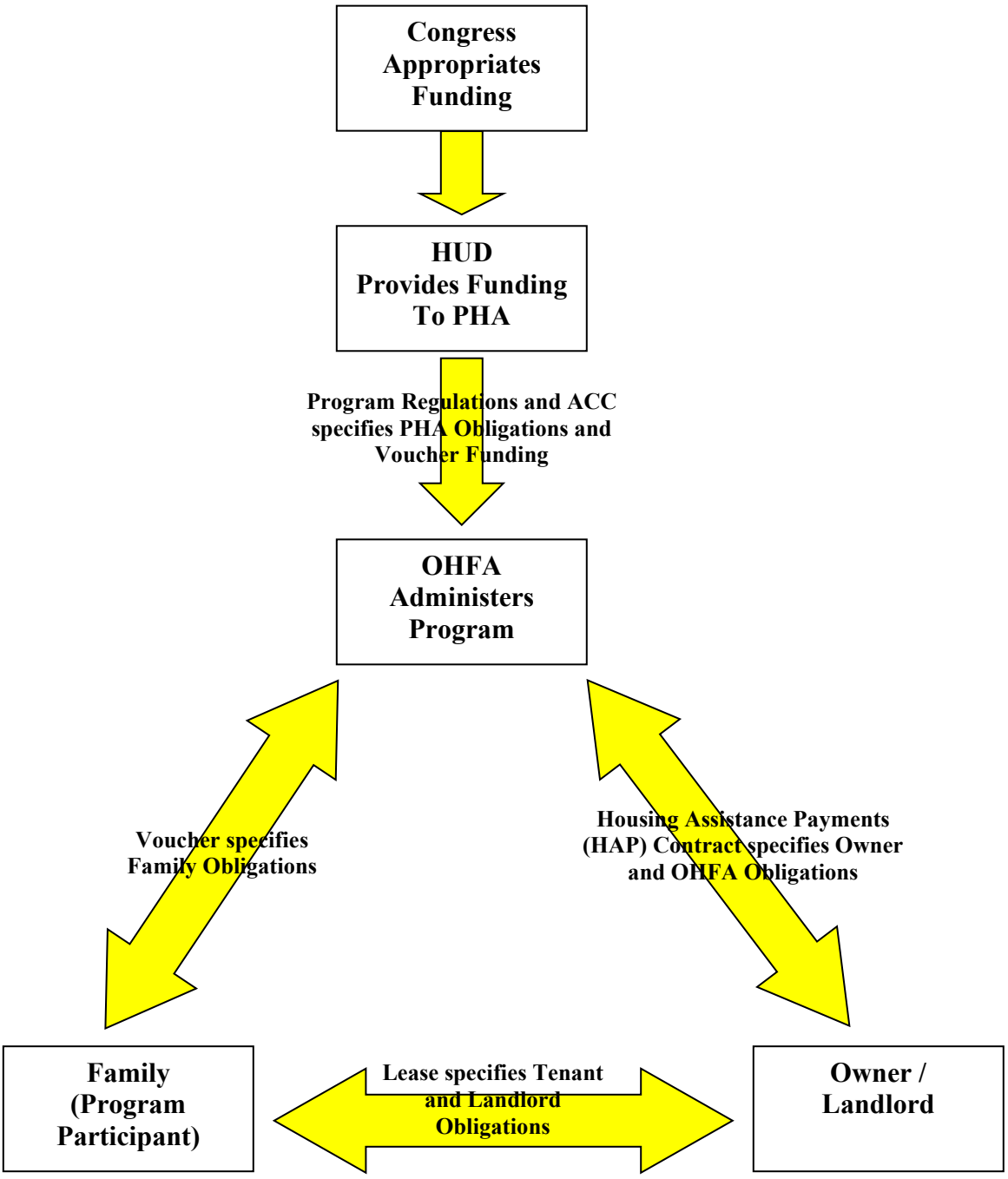
1-II.C. THE HCV PARTNERSHIPS

To administer the HCV program, OHFA enters into a contractual relationship with HUD. OHFA also enters into contractual relationships with the assisted family and the owner or landlord of the housing unit.

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

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

The HCV Relationships:



What does HUD do?

HUD has the following major responsibilities:

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

What does OHFA do?

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

- Establish local policies;
- Review applications from interested applicant families to determine whether applicants are eligible for the program;
- Maintain waiting list and select families for admission;
- Issue voucher to selected family and, if necessary, assist the family in finding a place to live;
- Conduct outreach to owners, with special attention to owners outside areas of poverty or minority concentration;
- Approve the rental unit (including assuring compliance with housing quality standards and rent reasonableness), the owner, and the tenancy;
- Make housing assistance payments to the owner in a timely manner;
- Ensure that families and their rental units continue to qualify under the program;
- Ensure that owners and families comply with program rules;
- Provide families and owners with prompt, professional service;
- Comply with all fair housing and equal opportunity requirements, HUD regulations and requirements, the Annual Contributions Contract, HUD-approved applications for funding, OHFA's administrative plan, and other applicable federal, state, and local laws.

What does the Owner do?

The owner has the following major responsibilities:

- Screen families who apply for tenancy, to determine if they will be good renters.
  - OHFA can provide some information to the owner, but the primary responsibility for tenant screening rests with the owner.
  - The owner should consider family background factors such as rent and bill-paying history, history of caring for property, respecting the rights of others to peaceful enjoyment of the property, compliance with essential conditions of tenancy, whether the family is engaging in drug-related criminal activity or other criminal activity that might threaten others.
- Comply with the terms of the Housing Assistance Payments contract, executed with OHFA;
- Comply with all applicable fair housing laws and discriminate against no one;
- Maintain the housing unit by making necessary repairs in a timely manner;
- Collect rent due from the assisted family and otherwise comply with and enforce provisions of the dwelling lease.

What does the Family do?

The family has the following responsibilities:

- Provide OHFA with complete and accurate information, determined by OHFA to be necessary for administration of the program;
- Make their best and most timely efforts to find a place to live that is suitable for them and that qualifies for the program;
- Attend all appointments scheduled by OHFA;
- Allow OHFA to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice;
- Take responsibility for care of the housing unit, including any violations of housing quality standards caused by the family;
- Comply with the terms of the lease with the owner;
- Comply with the family obligations of the voucher;
- Not commit serious or repeated violations of the lease;

- Not engage in drug-related or violent criminal activity;
- Notify OHFA and the owner before moving or terminating the lease;
- Use the assisted unit only for residence and as the sole residence of the family. Not sublet the unit, assign the lease, or have any interest in the unit;
- Promptly notify OHFA of any changes in family composition;
- Not commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any housing programs.

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

1-II.D. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

Applicable regulations include:

- 24 CFR Part 5: General Program Requirements
- 24 CFR Part 8: Nondiscrimination
- 24 CFR Part 35: Lead-Based Paint
- 24 CFR Part 100: The Fair Housing Act
- 24 CFR Part 982: Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance: Housing Choice Voucher Program
- 24 CFR Part 983: Project-Based Vouchers
- 24 CFR Part 985: The Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP)

PART III: THE HCV ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN

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

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

This administrative plan is set forth to define OHFA'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 handbooks and guidebooks, notices and other applicable law. The policies in this administrative plan have been

designed to ensure compliance with the consolidated ACC and all HUD-approved applications for program funding.

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

Administration of the HCV program and the functions and responsibilities of OHFA staff shall be in compliance with OHFA's personnel policy and HUD's Section 8 regulations as well as all federal, state, and local fair housing laws and regulations.

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

HUD regulations contain a list of what must be included in the administrative plan. OHFA's administrative plan must cover OHFA's policies on these subjects:

- Selection and admission of applicants from OHFA's waiting list, including any OHFA admission preferences, procedures for removing applicant names from the waiting list, and procedures for closing and reopening OHFA's waiting list (Chapter 4);
- Issuing or denying vouchers, including OHFA policy governing the voucher term and any extensions of the voucher term. If OHFA decides to allow extensions of the voucher term, OHFA's administrative plan must describe how OHFA determines whether to grant extensions, and how OHFA determines the length of any extension (Chapter 5);
- Any special rules for use of available funds when HUD provides funding to OHFA for a special purpose (e.g., desegregation), including funding for specified families or a specified category of families (Chapter 4);
- Occupancy policies, including definition of what group of persons may qualify as a 'family', definition of when a family is considered to be 'continuously assisted'; standards for denying admission or terminating assistance based on criminal activity or alcohol abuse in accordance with 982.553 (Chapters 3 and 12);
- Encouraging participation by owners of suitable units located outside areas of low income or minority concentration (Chapter 13);
- Assisting a family that claims that illegal discrimination has prevented the family from leasing a suitable unit (Chapter 2);
- Providing information about a family to prospective owners (Chapters 3 and 9);
- Disapproval of owners (Chapter 13);
- Subsidy standards (Chapter 5);

- Family absence from the dwelling unit (Chapter 12) ;
- How to determine who remains in the program if a family breaks up (Chapter 3);
- Informal review procedures for applicants (Chapter 16);
- Informal hearing procedures for participants (Chapter 16);
- The process for establishing and revising voucher payment standards, including policies on administering decreases in the payment standard during the HAP contract term (Chapter 16);
- The method of determining that rent to owner is a reasonable rent (initially and during the term of a HAP contract) (Chapter 8);
- Special policies concerning special housing types in the program (e.g., use of shared housing) (Chapter 15);
- Policies concerning payment by a family to OHFA of amounts the family owes OHFA (Chapter 16);
- Interim redeterminations of family income and composition (Chapter 11);
- Restrictions, if any, on the number of moves by a participant family (Chapter 10);
- Approval by the board of trustees or other authorized officials to charge the administrative fee reserve (Chapter 16);
- Procedural guidelines and performance standards for conducting required housing quality standards inspections (Chapter 8); and
- OHFA screening of applicants for family behavior or suitability for tenancy (Chapter 3).

Mandatory vs. Discretionary Policy

HUD makes a distinction between:

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

HUD expects OHFA to develop policies and procedures that are consistent with mandatory policies and to make clear the optional policies OHFA has adopted. OHFA's administrative plan is the foundation of those policies and procedures. HUD’s directions require OHFA to

make policy choices that provide guidance to staff and consistency to program applicants and participants.

Following HUD guidance, even though it is not mandatory, provides OHFA with a "safe harbor." HUD has already determined that the recommendations and suggestions it makes are consistent with mandatory policies. If OHFA adopts an alternative strategy, it must make its own determination that the alternative approach is consistent with legislation, regulations, and other mandatory requirements. There may be very good reasons for adopting a policy or procedure that is different from HUD's safe harbor, but OHFA should carefully think through those decisions.

1-III.C. ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

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

1-III.D. UPDATING AND REVISING THE PLAN

OHFA will revise this administrative plan, as needed to comply with changes in HUD regulations, OHFA operations, or when needed to ensure staff consistency. The original plan and substantial changes must be approved by

RESERVED

Chapter 2

FAIR HOUSING AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the laws and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations requiring Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) to affirmatively further civil rights and fair housing in all federally-assisted housing programs. The letter and spirit of these laws are implemented through consistent policy and processes. The responsibility to further nondiscrimination pertains to all areas of OHFA's housing choice voucher (HCV) operations.

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

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

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

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

PART I: NONDISCRIMINATION

2-I.A. OVERVIEW

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

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (as amended by the Community Development Act of 1974 and the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988)
- Executive Order 11063
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1975
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (to the extent that it applies, otherwise Section 504 and the Fair Housing Amendments govern)
- Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA)
- The Equal Access to Housing in HUD Programs Regardless of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity Final Rule, published in the *Federal Register* February 3, 2012 and further clarified in Notice PIH 2014-20

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

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

No state or local nondiscrimination laws or ordinances apply.

2-I.B. NONDISCRIMINATION

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

Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) shall not discriminate because of race, color, sex, religion, familial status, age, disability, or national origin (called "protected classes")

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

OHFA will not discriminate on the basis of marital status, gender identity, or sexual orientation [FR Notice 02/03/12].

OHFA does not identify any additional protected classes.

OHFA will not use any of these factors to:

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

Providing Information to Families and Owners

OHFA must take steps to ensure that families and owners are fully aware of all applicable civil rights laws. As part of the briefing process, OHFA must provide information to HCV applicant families about civil rights requirements and the opportunity to rent in a broad range of neighborhoods [24

CFR 982.301]. The Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract informs owners of the requirement not to discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, familial status, or disability in connection with the contract.

2-I.C. DISCRIMINATION COMPLIANTS

General Housing Discrimination Complaints

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

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

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

Within 14 business days of receiving the complaint, OHFA will investigate and attempt to remedy discrimination complaints made against the OHFA. OHFA will also advise the family of their right to file a fair housing complaint with HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO). The fair housing poster, posted in conspicuous and accessible locations in OHFA lobbies, will reference how to file a complaint with FHEO.

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

Complaints under the Equal Access Final Rule [Notice PIH 2014-20]

Notice PIH 2014-20 requires an articulated complaint process for allegations of discrimination under the Equal Access Final rule. The Equal Access Final Rule requires that OHFA provide equal access regardless of marital status, gender identity, or sexual orientation. OHFA will be informed on these obligations by the HUD Field Office or FHEO when an Equal Access complaint investigation begins.

Applicants or tenant families who believe that they have been subject to unlawful discrimination based on marital status, gender identity, or sexual orientation under the Equal Access Rule may notify OHFA either orally or in writing.

Within 14 business days of receiving the complaint, OHFA will provide a written notice to those alleged to have violated the rule. The PHA will also send a written notice to the complainant informing them that notice was sent to those alleged to have violated the rule, as well as information on how to complete and submit a housing discrimination complaint form to HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO).

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

Within 14 business days following the conclusion of the OHFA's investigation, OHFA will provide the complainant and those alleged to have violated the rule with findings and either a proposed corrective action plan or an explanation of why corrective action is not warranted.

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

VAWA Complaint Processing [Notice FHEO 2023-01]

A complainant may, not later than one year after an alleged VAWA violation has occurred or terminated, file a complaint with FHEO alleging such violation. If there is a violation that began prior to a year before the complaint is filed, but it continues into the one-year time period, HUD will accept the complaint. FHEO will investigate the complaint if it is timely and FHEO otherwise has jurisdiction. If a complaint is filed more than one year after the alleged violation occurred or terminated, FHEO may, but is not required to, investigate the allegations under the additional authority and procedures described in FHEO 2023-01.

Complaints do not need to allege a violation of the Fair Housing Act for FHEO to accept and investigate the complaint.

Applicants or tenant families who wish to file a VAWA complaint against OHFA may notify OHFA either orally or in writing.

OHFA will advise the family of their right to file a VAWA complaint with HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO). OHFA will inform the family that not later than one year after an alleged VAWA violation has occurred or terminated, applicants and tenants who believe they have been injured by a VAWA violation or will be injured by such a violation that is about to occur may file a VAWA complaint using FHEO's online complaint form via mail, email, or telephone.

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

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

PART II: POLICIES RELATED TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

2-II.A. OVERVIEW

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

OHFA must ensure that persons with disabilities have full access to OHFA's programs and services. This responsibility begins with the first inquiry of an interested family and continues through every programmatic area of the HCV program.

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

> OHFA complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you are an individual who needs an accommodation, please note the type of accommodation necessary, and OHFA will make every effort, within reason, to make sure this accommodation is provided.

2-II.B. DEFINITION OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

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

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

Types of Reasonable Accommodations

When needed, OHFA must modify normal procedures to accommodate the needs of a person with disabilities. Examples include:

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

2-II.C. REQUEST FOR AN ACCOMMODATION

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

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

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

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

2-II.D. VERIFICATION OF DISABILITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

address of the knowledgeable professional who sent the information [Notice PIH 2010-26].

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

OHFA must approve a request for an accommodation if the following three conditions are met:

- The request was made by or on behalf of a person with a disability.
- There is a disability-related need for the accommodation.
- The requested accommodation is reasonable, meaning it would not impose an undue financial and administrative burden on OHFA, or fundamentally alter the nature of OHFA's HCV operations (including the obligation to comply with HUD requirements and regulations).

Requests for accommodations must be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account factors such as the overall size of OHFA's program with respect to the number of employees, type of facilities and size of budget, type of operation including composition and structure of workforce, the nature and cost of the requested accommodation, and the availability of alternative accommodations that would effectively meet the family's disability-related needs.

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

After a request for an accommodation is presented, OHFA will respond, within 14 days.

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

If OHFA believes that the family has failed to identify a reasonable alternative accommodation after interactive discussion and negotiation, OHFA will notify the family, in writing, of its determination within 14 days from the date of the most recent discussion or communication with the family.

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

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

At the initial point of contact with each applicant, OHFA shall inform all applicants of alternative

forms of communication that can be used other than plain language paperwork.

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

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

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

2-II.G. PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

OHFA must comply with a variety of regulations pertaining to physical accessibility, including the following:

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

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

- OHFA's Administrative Plan describes the key policies that govern OHFA's responsibilities with regard to physical accessibility.
- Notice PIH 2010-26 summarizes information about pertinent laws and implementing regulations related to nondiscrimination and accessibility in federally-funded housing programs.

The design, construction, or alteration of OHFA facilities must conform to the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS). Newly constructed facilities must be designed to be readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. Alterations to existing facilities must be accessible to the maximum extent feasible, defined as not imposing an undue financial and administrative burden on the operations of the HCV program.

When issuing a voucher to a family that includes an individual with disabilities, OHFA will include

a current list of available accessible units known to OHFA and will assist the family in locating an available accessible unit, if necessary.

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

A reasonable modification is a structural change made to existing premises, occupied or to be occupied by a person with a disability, in order to afford such person full enjoyment of the premises. Reasonable modifications can include structural changes to interiors and exteriors of dwellings and to common and public use areas [24 CFR 100.203].

2-II.H. DENIAL OR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE

OHFA's decision to deny or terminate the assistance of a family that includes a person with disabilities is subject to consideration of reasonable accommodation [24 CFR 982.552 (2)(iv)].

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

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

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

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

2-III.A. OVERVIEW

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

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

LEP is defined as persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English. For the purposes of this administrative plan, LEP persons are HCV applicants and participants, and parents and family members of applicants and participants.

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

2-III.B. ORAL INTERPRETATION

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

OHFA will utilize a language line for telephone interpreter services.

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

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

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

Where feasible and possible, the OHFA will train and hire bilingual staff to be available to act as interpreters and translators, will pool resources with other PHAs, and will standardize documents.

2-III.C. WRITTEN TRANSLATION

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

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

OHFA will periodically review the demographics of persons applying for assistance to determine the feasibility of translating vital written material. OHFA may use HUD translated materials and documents in other languages that are available on HUD's website to meet the needs of LEP persons, as applicable.

2-III.D. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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

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

If it is determined that OHFA serves very few LEP persons, and OHFA has very limited

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

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

EXHIBIT 2-1: DEFINITION OF A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY UNDER FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS [24 CFR Parts 8.3 and 100.201]

A person with a disability, as defined under federal civil rights laws, is any person who:

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

The phrase "physical or mental impairment" includes:

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

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

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

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

The definition of a person with disabilities does not include:

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

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

The HUD definition of a person with a disability is much narrower than the civil rights definition of disability. The HUD definition of a person with a disability is used for purposes of receiving the disabled family preference, the $400 elderly/disabled household deduction, the $480 dependent deduction, the allowance for medical expenses, or the allowance for disability assistance expenses.

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

RESERVED

Chapter 3

ELIGIBILITY

INTRODUCTION

Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) is responsible for ensuring that every individual and family admitted to the HCV program meets all program eligibility requirements. This includes any individual approved to join the family after the family has been admitted to the program. The family must provide any information needed by OHFA to confirm eligibility and determine the level of the family's assistance.

To be eligible for the HCV program:

- The applicant family must:
  - Qualify as a family as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and OHFA.
  - Have income at or below HUD-specified income limits.
  - Qualify on the basis of citizenship or the eligible immigrant status of family members.
  - Provide social security number information for family members as required.
  - Consent to OHFA's collection and use of family information as provided for in OHFA-provided consent forms.
  - Not currently be receiving a duplicative subsidy.
  - Meet net asset and property ownership restriction requirements.

- OHFA must determine that the current or past behavior of household members does not include activities that are prohibited by HUD or OHFA.

This chapter contains three parts:

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

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

Part III: Denial of Assistance. This part covers factors related to an applicant's past or current conduct (e.g. criminal activity) that can cause the OHFA to deny assistance as well as the asset limitation for HCV.

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PART I: DEFINITIONS OF FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

3-I.A. OVERVIEW

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

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

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

Family

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

Gender Identity means actual or perceived gender-related characteristics.

Sexual orientation means homosexuality, heterosexuality, or bisexuality.

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

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

Household

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

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

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

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

- If the family breakup results from an occurrence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, OHFA must ensure that the victim retains assistance. (For documentation requirements and policies related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking, see section 16-IX.D of this plan.)

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

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

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

  In the absence of a judicial decision or an agreement among the original family members, OHFA will determine which family will retain their placement on the waiting list or continue to receive assistance. In making its determination, OHFA will take into consideration the following factors: (1) the interest of any minor children, including custody arrangements; (2) the interest of any ill, elderly, or disabled family members; (3) the interest of any family member who is the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, including a family member who was forced to leave an assisted unit as a result of such actual or threatened abuse; (4) any possible risks to family members as a result of criminal activity; (5) the recommendations of social service professionals; and (6) which family member applied as head of household (HOH).

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

Remaining Member of a Tenant Family [24 CFR 5.403]

The HUD definition of family includes the *remaining member of a tenant family,* which is a member of an assisted family who remains in the unit when other members of the family have left the unit. Household members such as live-in aides, foster children, and foster adults do not qualify as remaining members of a family.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Spouse means the marriage partner of the head of household.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In order to include a dependent under the age of 18 that is not an emancipated minor, a family member must have legal custody or guardianship. The rental unit must be the child's permanent residence. OHFA uses the following "familial status" definition of the Fair Housing Act from 24 CFR 100.20 to assist in determining eligibility:

> **Familial status means one or more individuals (who have not attained the age of 18 years) being domiciled with—**
>
> **(a) A parent or another person having legal custody of such individual or individuals; or**
>
> **(b) The designee of such parent or other person having such custody, with the written permission of such parent or other person.**

The protections afforded against discrimination on the basis of familial status shall apply to any person who is pregnant or is in the process of securing legal custody of any individual who has not attained the age of 18 years.

Some ways to document "familial status" include the following:

- **Have legal custody or guardianship of the child as documented by court papers; or**
- **Have claimed the child as a dependent on the most recently filed tax return (as documented by the tax return) and anticipates claiming the child as a dependent for the present calendar year; or**
- **Are in the process of adopting the child as documented by court papers. However, if an adult "intends" to pursue custody, that is inadequate to establish eligibility; or**
- **A properly executed power of attorney (notarized and filed at the county courthouse) that substantially complies with the statutory form of power of**

attorney codified in the Oklahoma Statutes - Title 10 Section 700 by the parent or other person having legal custody or guardianship; or

- **Social service agency records demonstrating custody; or**
- **School records demonstrating custody.**

Joint Custody of Dependents

Dependents that are subject to a joint custody arrangement will be considered a member of the family, if they live with the applicant or participant family 51 percent or more of the time. **A copy of the joint custody agreement must be provided to OHFA before the children will be considered members of the household.**

When more than one applicant or participant family is claiming the same dependents as family members, the family with primary custody at the time of the initial examination or reexamination will be able to claim the dependents. If there is a dispute about which family should claim them, OHFA will make the determination based on available documents such as court orders, **address that is listed in the school records,** or an IRS return showing which family has claimed the child for income tax purposes.

Children not subject to a joint custody agreement will be considered members of the household if the children are in the home "51% of the time." 51% is defined as 183 days of the year, which do not have to run consecutively.

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

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

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

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

Elderly Persons

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

Near-Elderly Persons

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

Elderly Family

An *elderly family* is one in which the head, spouse, cohead, or sole member is an elderly person. Identifying elderly families is important because these families qualify for special deductions from income as described in Chapter 6.

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

Persons with Disabilities

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

As discussed in Chapter 2, OHFA must make all aspects of the HCV program accessible to persons with disabilities and consider reasonable accommodations requested based upon a person's disability.

Disabled Family

A *disabled family* is one in which the head, spouse, or cohead is a person with disabilities. Identifying disabled families is important because these families qualify for special deductions from income as described in Chapter 6.

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

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

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

> A guest can remain in the assisted unit no longer than 30 consecutive days or a total of 90 cumulative calendar days during any 12-month period.
>
> Children who are subject to a joint custody arrangement or for whom a family has visitation privileges, that are not included as a family member because they live outside of the assisted household more than 50 percent of the time, are not subject to the time limitations of guests as described above.

A family may request an exception to this policy for valid reasons (e.g., care of a relative recovering from a medical procedure is expected to last 40 consecutive days). An exception will

not be made unless the family can identify and provide documentation of the residence to which the guest will return

3-I.K. FOSTER CHILDREN AND FOSTER ADULTS

A *foster adult* is a member of the household who is 18 years of age or older and meets the definition of a *foster adult* under state law. In general, a foster adult is a person who is 18 years of age or older, is unable to live independently due to a debilitating physical or mental condition, and is placed with the family by an authorized placement agency or by judgment, decree, or other order of any court of competent jurisdiction.

A *foster child* is a member of the household who meets the definition of a *foster child* under state law. In general, a foster child is placed with the family by an authorized placement agency (e.g., public child welfare agency) or by judgment, decree, or other order of any court of competent jurisdiction.

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

> A *foster child* is a child that is in the legal guardianship or custody of a state, county, or private adoption or foster care agency, yet is cared for by foster parents in their own homes, under some kind of short-term or long-term foster care arrangement with the custodial agency.
>
> A foster child or foster adult may be allowed to reside in the unit if their presence would not result in a violation of HQS space standards according to 24 CFR 982.401.

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

3-I.L. ABSENT FAMILY MEMBERS

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

Definitions of Temporarily and Permanently Absent

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

Absent Students

If a family member attends school away from home, the family member will not be considered a member of the household and will be considered a visitor during breaks and school recesses.

Absences Due to Court Orders

If a member of the family, other than the HOH, is subject to a court order that restricts the member from the home, the family member will no longer be considered a member of the household. If the family member intends to return to the household, the family member will be subject to the eligibility and screening requirements of this plan.

OHFA must approve all additions to the household, including the addition of family members formerly a part of the assisted household.

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

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

If a child has been placed in foster care, OHFA will verify with the appropriate agency whether and when the child is expected to be returned to the home. If the child will be absent for more than 180 days or the agency confirms that the child has been permanently removed from the home, the child will be removed from the household.

Absent Head, Spouse, or Cohead

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

Absences Due to Incarceration

OHFA will terminate assistance for families where the HOH has been incarcerated more than 30 consecutive days for committing a non-violent, non-drug related criminal act. If the HOH has been incarcerated for committing a violent or drug related act, OHFA will initiate termination of assistance.

If a family member, other than the HOH, is expected to be incarcerated for more than 30 consecutive days (for non-violent, non-drug related criminal activity), the family member will be removed as a member of the household. If the family member intends to return to the unit following incarceration, the individual is subject to the eligibility and screening requirements discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

A family member incarcerated for committing a violent or drug-related criminal act will subject the entire family to termination from the program.

OHFA must pre-approve all additions to the household, including the addition of a family member formerly a part of the assisted household.

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

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

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

Return of Permanently Absent Family Members

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

Joint Custody of Children

In the case of joint custody, only one family may claim a child as a dependent. When two assisted families could conceivably claim the child, the two families must resolve the issue and declare which household will receive the dependent deduction. If the two households are unable to resolve the issue, OHFA will make the determination based on such factors as who claimed the child as a dependent on the most recent income tax filing or the address of the family member listed in the child's school records.

Caretakers for a Child

If neither a parent nor a designated guardian remains in a household receiving HCV assistance, OHFA will take one of the following actions:

(1) Terminate assistance; or

(2) Continue assistance if a governing agency, such as DHS, has determined that another adult is to be brought into the assisted unit to care for the child. The caretaker must meet all program qualifications.

When custody or guardianship has been legally awarded to a caretaker, the housing choice voucher will be transferred to the caretaker.

3-I.M. LIVE-IN AIDE

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

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

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

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

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

Occasional, intermittent, multiple or rotating caregivers do not meet the definition of a live-in aide. [Notice PIH 2014-25 (HA)]

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

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

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

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

Within 14 days of receiving a request for a live-in aide, including all required documentation related to the request, OHFA will notify the family of its decision in writing.

PART II: BASIC ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

3-II.A. INCOME ELIGIBILITY AND TARGETING

Income Limits

HUD is required by law to set income limits that determine the eligibility of applicants for HUD's assisted housing programs, including the housing choice voucher program. The income limits are published annually and are based on HUD estimates of median family income in a particular area or county, with adjustments for family size.

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

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

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

Extremely low-income family. A family whose annual income does not exceed the federal poverty level or 30 percent of the median income for the area, whichever number is higher.

Area median income is determined by HUD, with adjustments for smaller and larger families. HUD may establish income ceilings higher or lower than 30, 50, or 80 percent of the median income for an area if HUD finds that such variations are necessary because of unusually high or low family incomes.

Using Income Limits for Eligibility [24 CFR 982.201]

Income limits are used for eligibility only at admission. Eligibility is established by comparing a family's annual income with HUD's published income limits. To be income-eligible, a family must be one of the following:

- A *very low-income* family
- A *low-income* family that has been "continuously assisted" under the 1937 Housing Act. A family is considered to be continuously assisted if the family is already receiving assistance under any 1937 Housing Act program at the time the family is admitted to the HCV program [24 CFR 982.4;24 CFR982.201(b)]

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

- A low-income family that qualifies for voucher assistance as a non-purchasing household living in HOPE 1 (public housing homeownership), HOPE 2 (multifamily housing

homeownership) developments, or other HUD-assisted multifamily homeownership programs covered by 24 CFR 248.173

A low-income or moderate-income family that is displaced as a result of the prepayment of a mortgage or voluntary termination of a mortgage insurance contract on eligible low-income housing as defined in 24 CFR 248.101

- Multijurisdictional PHAs: The applicable income limit used for initial issuance of a voucher is the highest income limit within OHFA's jurisdiction.

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

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

Using Income Limits for Targeting [24 CFR 982.201]

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

Families continuously assisted under the 1937 Housing Act and families living in eligible low-income housing that are displaced as a result of prepayment of a mortgage or voluntary termination of a mortgage insurance contract are not subject to the 75 percent restriction.

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

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

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

Declaration [24 CFR 5.508]

HUD requires each family member to declare whether the individual is a citizen, a national, or an eligible noncitizen, except those members who elect not to contend that they have eligible immigration status. Those who elect not to contend their status are considered to be ineligible noncitizens. For citizens, nationals and eligible noncitizens the declaration must be signed

personally by the head, spouse, cohead, and any other family member 18 or older, and by a parent or guardian for minors. The family must identify in writing any family members who elect not to contend their immigration status (see Ineligible Noncitizens below). No declaration is required for live-in aides, foster children, or foster adults.

U.S. Citizens and Nationals

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

> Family members who declare citizenship or national status will not be required to provide additional documentation unless OHFA receives information indicating that an individual's declaration may not be accurate.

Eligible Noncitizens

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

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

Ineligible Noncitizens

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

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

Mixed Families

A family is eligible for assistance as long as at least one member is a citizen, national, or eligible noncitizen. Families that include eligible and ineligible individuals are considered *mixed families*. Such families will be given notice that their assistance will be prorated and that they may request a hearing if they contest this determination. See Chapter 6 for a discussion of how rents are prorated, and Chapter 16 for a discussion of informal hearing procedures.

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

OHFA may elect to provide assistance to a family before the verification of the eligibility of the individual or one family member [24 CFR 5.512(b)]. Otherwise, no individual or family may be assisted prior to the affirmative establishment by OHFA that the individual or at least one family member is eligible. Verification of eligibility for this purpose occurs when the individual or family members have submitted documentation to OHFA in accordance with program requirements [24 CFR 5.512(a)].

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

When OHFA determines that an applicant family does not include any citizens, nationals, or eligible noncitizens, following the verification process, the family will be sent a written notice within 14 days of the determination.

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

Informal hearing procedures are contained in Chapter 16.

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

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

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

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

The applicant and all members of the applicant's household must disclose the complete and accurate social security number (SSN) assigned to each household member, and the documentation necessary to verify each SSN. If a child under age 6 has been added to an applicant family within 6 months prior to voucher issuance, an otherwise eligible family may be admitted to the program and must disclose and document the child's SSN within 90 days of the effective date of the initial HAP contract. A detailed discussion of acceptable documentation is provided in Chapter 7.

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

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

3-II.D. FAMILY CONSENT TO RELEASE OF INFORMATION [24 CFR 5.230; HCV GB, p. 5-13]

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

OHFA must deny admission to the program if any member of the applicant family fails to sign and submit the consent forms for obtaining information in accordance with 24 CFR 5, Subparts B and F [24 CFR 982.552(b)(3)].

However, this does not apply if the applicant or participant, or any member of their family, revokes their consent with respect to the ability of OHFA to access financial records from financial institutions, unless the PHA establishes a policy that revocation of consent to access financial records will result in denial of admission or termination of assistance [24 CFR 5.232(c)]

> OHFA has established a policy that revocation of consent to access financial records will result in denial of admission.

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

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

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

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

Definitions

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

Dependent Child

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

Independent Student

OHFA will consider a student "independent" from their parents and the parents' income will not be considered when determining the student's eligibility if the following four criteria are all met:

The individual is of legal contract age under state law.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The individual is a graduate or professional student

The individual is married

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

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

A local educational agency homeless liaison

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

A financial aid administrator

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

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

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

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

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

Institution of Higher Education

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

Parents

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

Person with Disabilities

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

Veteran

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

Vulnerable Youth

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

> The individual is an orphan, in foster care, or a ward of the court, or was an orphan, in foster care, or ward of the court at any time when the individual was 13 years of age or older
>
> The individual is, or was immediately prior to attaining the age of majority, an emancipated minor or in legal guardianship as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction in the individual's state of legal residence
>
> The individual has been verified during the school year in which the application is submitted as either an unaccompanied youth who is a homeless child or youth, or as unaccompanied, at risk of homelessness, and self-supporting by:
>
> > A local educational agency homeless liaison
> >
> > The director of a program funded under subtitle B of title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act or a designee of the director

A financial aid administrator

Determining Student Eligibility

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

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

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

Determine whether the student is independent from their parents in accordance with the definition of *independent student* in this section

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

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

Determining Parental Income Eligibility

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

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

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

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

If the student has been living with one of their parents and has not had contact with or does not know where to contact their other parent, OHFA will require the student to submit a certification under penalty of perjury describing the

circumstances and stating that the student does not receive financial assistance from the other parent. OHFA will then obtain an income declaration and certification of income from the parent with whom the student has been living or had contact.

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

3-II.F. EIV SYSTEM SEARCHES [EIV FAQs; EIV System Training 9/30/20; and Notice PIH 2023-27]

Existing Tenant Search

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

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

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

Debts Owed to PHAs and Terminations

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

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

> OHFA will require each adult household member to sign the form HUD-52675 once at the eligibility determination. Any new members added to the household after admission will be required to sign the form HUD-52675 prior to being added to the household.
>
> OHFA will search the Debts Owed to PHAs and Terminations module as part of the eligibility determination for new households and as part of the screening process for any household members added after the household is admitted to the program. If any information on debts or terminations is returned by the search, the PHA will determine if this information warrants a denial in accordance with the policies in Part III of this chapter.

Income Report

For each new admission, OHFA is required to review income information in EIV to confirm and validate family reported income within 120 days after the admission information is transmitted to HUD. OHFA must print and maintain copies of the reports in the tenant file and resolve any discrepancies with the family.

PART III: DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE

3-III.A. OVERVIEW

A family that does not meet the eligibility criteria discussed in Parts I and II, must be denied assistance. OHFA may deny assistance for an applicant because of the family's action or failure to act as described in 24 CFR 982.552 or 982.553. In this section we will discuss other situations and circumstances in which denial of assistance is mandatory for OHFA, and those in which denial of assistance is optional for OHFA.

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

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

HUD's Office of General Counsel issued a memo on April 4, 2016, regarding the application of Fair Housing Act standards to the use of criminal records. This memo states that a PHA violates the Fair Housing Act when their policy or practice has an unjustified discriminatory effect, even when the PHA had no intention to discriminate. Where a policy or practice that restricts admission based on criminal history has a disparate impact on a particular race, national origin, or other protected class, that policy or practice is in violation of the Fair Housing Act if it is not necessary to serve a substantial, legitimate, nondiscriminatory interest of OHFA, or if that interest could be served by another practice that has a less discriminatory effect [OGC Memo 4/4/16]. HUD codified this stance on disparate impact and discriminatory effects in a final rule dated March 31, 2023. In doing so, HUD also standardized its long-practiced three-step approach to assessing burdens of proof.

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

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

Denial of assistance includes any of the following:

- Not placing the family's name on the waiting list
- Denying or withdrawing a voucher

- Not approving a request for tenancy or refusing to enter into a HAP contract
- Refusing to process a request for or to provide assistance under portability procedures

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

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

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

3-III.B. MANDATORY DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.553(a), Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act (QHWRA), HUD Memorandum from Sandra B. Henriquez February 10, 2011]

HUD requires OHFA to deny assistance in the following cases:

- Any member of the household has been evicted from federally-assisted housing in the last 3 years for drug-related criminal activity. HUD permits, but does not require, OHFA to admit an otherwise-eligible family if the household member has completed a PHA-approved drug rehabilitation program or the circumstances which led to eviction no longer exist (e.g., the person involved in the criminal activity no longer lives in the household).

  OHFA may admit an otherwise-eligible family who was evicted from federally-assisted housing within the past 3 years for drug-related criminal activity. OHFA is permitted, but not required, to consider all relevant circumstances when determining eligibility for

assistance if household member has completed a PHA-approved drug rehabilitation program or person involved no longer lives in the household.

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

  Currently engaged in is defined as any use of illegal drugs during the previous twelve months.

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

  In determining reasonable cause, OHFA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of convictions, arrests, or evictions of household members related to the use of illegal drugs or the abuse of alcohol. Testimony from neighbors, when combined with other factual evidence can be considered credible evidence. Other credible evidence includes documentation of drug raids or arrest warrants.

  OHFA will pursue fact-finding efforts as needed to obtain credible evidence.

  Assistance will be denied if a household member is charged/arrested/convicted for any alcohol-related criminal activity on or near the premises during the previous twelve months. Assistance will be denied for a period of 3 years from the date of termination.

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

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

The family does not meet the restrictions on net assets and real property ownership as required by 24 CFR 5.618.

3-III.C. RESTRICTION ON ASSISTANCE BASED ON ASSETS [24 CFR 5.618]

There are two circumstances under which a family is ineligible to receive assistance based on asset ownership.

First, assistance may not be provided to any family if the family's net assets exceed $100,000 (adjusted annually by HUD).

Second, the family has real property (as defined under state law in which the property is located) that is suitable for occupancy by the family as a residence and the family has:

- A present ownership interest in the real property; and

- A legal right to reside in the real property; and
- The effective legal authority to sell (based on state or local laws of the jurisdiction where the property is located) the real property.

OHFA does not have the discretion not to enforce or provide limited enforcement of the asset limitation at admission. However, the real property restriction does not apply in the following circumstances:

- Any property for which the family is receiving assistance for a manufactured home under 24 CFR 982.620 or under the HCV Homeownership program;
- Any property that is jointly owned by a member of the family and at least one non-household member who does not live with the family, if the non-household member resides at the jointly owned property;
- Any family that is offering the property for sale; or
- Any person who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
    - When a family asks for an exception because a family member is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the PHA must comply with all the confidentiality requirements under VAWA. The PHA must accept a self-certification from the family member, and the restrictions on requesting documentation under VAWA apply.

A property is considered *suitable for occupancy* unless the family demonstrates that it:

- Does not meet the disability-related needs for all members of the family (*e.g.,* physical accessibility requirements, disability-related need for additional bedrooms, proximity to accessible transportation, etc.);
- Is not sufficient for the size of the family;

    OHFA defines *not sufficient for the size of the family* as being overcrowded based on space standards in Chapter 8 of this policy.

- Is geographically located so as to be a hardship for the family (e.g., the distance or commuting time between the property and the family's place of work or school would be a hardship to the family, as determined by the PHA or owner);

  In general, OHFA defines *a geographic hardship* to include when a family members' work, school, health care provider, or other necessary service is located an unreasonable distance from the real property or there is a lack of adequate transportation options for the family to access work, school, health care, or other necessary services. The PHA will consider circumstantial details a family faces when determining whether a geographical hardship is present.

- Is not safe to reside in because of the physical condition of the property (e.g., property's physical condition poses a risk to the family's health and safety and the condition of the property cannot be easily remedied); or
- Is not a property that a family may reside in under the state or local laws of the jurisdiction where the property is located.

If a family meets one of the above exceptions, the real property is not automatically excluded from the calculation of net family assets. Unless the real property is specifically excluded from net family assets as described in 24 CFR 5.603 and Chapter 6 of this policy, it will be included in net family assets. If the value of that real property brings the net family assets above $100,000 (as adjusted for inflation), the family is out of compliance with the asset limitation.

See Chapter 7 for information on verifying net family assets for purposes of the asset limitation.

- 3-III.D. OTHER PERMITTED REASONS FOR DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE

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

Criminal Activity [24 CFR 982.553]

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

If any household member is currently engaged in, or has engaged in any of the following criminal activities, within the past twelve months, the family will be denied assistance.

Drug-related criminal activity, defined by HUD as the illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, or use of a drug, or the possession of a drug with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute or use the drug [24 CFR 5.100].

Violent criminal activity, defined by HUD as any criminal activity that has as one of its elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force substantial enough to cause, or be reasonably likely to cause, serious bodily injury or property damage [24 CFR 5.100].

Criminal activity that may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or persons residing in the immediate vicinity; or

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

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

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

Any charges/arrests/convictions for drug-related or violent criminal activity within the past 12 months, although a record of arrest(s) may not be the only basis for denial or proof that the applicant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

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

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

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

OHFA is not to deny assistance to a family because the family previously failed to meet its obligations under the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program [24CFR 984.101(d)].

OHFA will deny assistance to an applicant family if:

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

The family does not provide complete and true information to OHFA.

Any family member has been evicted from federally-assisted housing for drug related criminal activity in the last three years.

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

The family owes rent or other amounts to any PHA in connection with Section 8 or other public housing assistance under the 1937 Act, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt or enters into a repayment agreement with the reporting PHA and provides a copy of the repayment agreement to OHFA or

provides a written statement from the reporting PHA verifying a repayment agreement is in place.

If 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, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt prior to voucher issuance or enters into a repayment agreement with the reporting PHA and provides a copy of the repayment agreement to OHFA or provides a written statement from the reporting PHA verifying a repayment agreement is in place.

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

> When denying admission due to family debts as shown in HUD's EIV system, the PHA will provide the family with a copy of the EIV Debt Owed to PHA and Termination report.
>
> If the family wishes to dispute the information in the report, the family must contact the PHA that entered the information in EIV in writing, explaining why EIV information is disputed. The family must also provide a copy of the letter and all applicable verification to the PHA to support the family's claim. The PHA will consider the information provided by the family prior to issuing a notice of denial.

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

> *Abusive or violent behavior towards OHFA personnel* includes verbal as well as physical abuse or violence. Use of racial epithets, or other language, written or oral, that is customarily used to intimidate may be considered abusive or violent behavior.
>
> *Threatening* refers to oral or written threats or physical gestures that communicate intent to abuse or commit violence.

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

The family must not have violated any family obligation during previous participation in the Section 8 program for 3 years prior to final eligibility determination. This includes previous participation in the Section 8 program administered by another Public Housing Authority (PHA).

If the family has an outstanding debt to another PHA and the PHA agrees to allow the family to enter into a repayment agreement, OHFA will allow the family to be admitted to the program as long as payments are current.

However, if the family defaults on a repayment agreement, the family may be terminated.

If an applicant owes an outstanding debt to OHFA or another PHA, which is the result of misrepresentation from previous participation, and the applicant files bankruptcy on the debt, OHFA will deny assistance for 10 years following discharge of the debt.

The family must be in good standing regarding any current payment agreement made with another PHA for a previous debt incurred, before OHFA will allow participation in its Section 8 program.

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

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

3-III.E. SCREENING

Screening for Eligibility

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

OHFA will perform a criminal background check for every adult household member.

OHFA is required to perform criminal background checks necessary to determine whether any household member is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender program in the state where the housing is located, as well as in any other state where a household member is known to have resided [24 CFR 982.553(a)(2)(i)].

At admission, owner initiated requests, adding of members to the household, or suspicion of fraud or illegal criminal/drug activity, OHFA will use the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Database, a searchable database hosted by the Department of Justice. It combines data from

individual state sex offender registries and other national, state, and local resources to prevent lifetime registered sex offenders from receiving federal housing assistance. [Notice PIH 2012-28]

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

Screening for Suitability as a Tenant [24 CFR 982.307]

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

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

The owner is responsible for screening and selection of the family to occupy the owner's unit. OHFA must inform the owner that screening and selection for tenancy is the responsibility of the owner. An owner may consider a family's history with respect to factors such as: payment of rent and utilities, caring for a unit and premises, respecting the rights of other residents to the peaceful enjoyment of their housing, criminal activity that is a threat to the health, safety or property of others, and compliance with other essential conditions of tenancy.

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

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

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

3-III.F. CRITERIA FOR DECIDING TO DENY ASSISTANCE

Evidence [24 CFR 982.553(c)]

OHFA will use the concept of the preponderance of the evidence as the standard for making all admission decisions.

Preponderance of the evidence is defined as evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence which as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not. Preponderance of the evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence.

Consideration of Circumstances [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)]

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

OHFA will consider the following factors prior to making its decision:

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

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

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

The length of time since the violation occurred, the family's recent history and the likelihood of favorable conduct in the future

While a record of arrest(s) may not be the only basis for denial, - an arrest may trigger an investigation to determine whether the applicant actually engaged in disqualifying criminal activity. As part of its investigation, OHFA may use police report(s) associated with the arrest and consider the reported circumstances of the arrest. OHFA may also consider:

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

Whether criminal charges were filed

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

Any other evidence relevant to determining whether the applicant engaged in disqualifying activity

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

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

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

Removal of a Family Member's Name from the Application [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)(ii)]

HUD permits OHFA to impose as a condition of admission, a requirement that family members who participated in or were culpable for an action or failure to act which results in the denial of assistance, to not reside in the unit.

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

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

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

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

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

3-III.G. NOTICE OF ELIGIBILITY OR DENIAL

If the family is eligible for assistance, OHFA will notify the family when it extends the invitation to attend the voucher briefing appointment, as discussed in Chapter 5.

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

> The family will be notified of a decision to deny assistance in writing within 14 days of the determination.

If OHFA uses a criminal record or sex offender registration information obtained under 24 CFR 5, Subpart J, as the basis of a denial, a copy of the record must precede the notice to deny, with an opportunity for the applicant to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information before OHFA can move to deny the application. In addition, a copy of the record must be provided to the subject of the record [24 CFR 5.903(f) and 5.905(d)]. OHFA must give the family an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of that record, in the informal review process in accordance with program requirements [24 CFR 982.553(d)].

> If based on a criminal record or sex offender registration information, an applicant family appears to be ineligible OHFA will notify the family in writing of the proposed denial and provide a copy of the record to the applicant and to the subject of the record. The family will be given 14 days to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information. If the family does not contact OHFA to dispute the information within that 14-day period, OHFA will proceed with issuing the notice of denial of admission. A family that does not exercise their right to dispute the accuracy of the information prior to issuance of the official denial letter will still be given the opportunity to do so as part of the informal review process.

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

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

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

The Violence Against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) and the HUD regulation at 24 CFR 5.2005(b) prohibit PHAs from denying an applicant admission to the HCV program "on the basis or as a direct result of the fact that the applicant is or has been a victim of domestic violence,

dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, if the applicant otherwise qualifies for assistance or admission.''

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

Notification

HUD's Final Rule effective December 16, 2016, implemented the VAWA 2013 expanded notification requirements for OHFA to provide applicants who are denied assistance or admission with a Notice of Occupancy Rights (form HUD-5380) and the Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking (form HUD-5382) at the time the applicant is denied.

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

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

OHFA will include in its notice of denial VAWA information and provide copies of the Notice of Occupancy Rights (form HUD-5380) and the Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking (form HUD-5382). OHFA will request that an applicant wishing to claim protection under VAWA notify OHFA within 14 business days.

Documentation

Victim Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007]

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

Perpetrator Documentation

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 their belief that the rehabilitation was successfully completed or is progressing successfully. The victim and perpetrator must also sign or attest to the documentation.

EXHIBIT 3-1: DETAILED DEFINITIONS RELATED TO DISABILITIES

Person with Disabilities [24 CFR 5.403]

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

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

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

  In the case of an individual who has attained the age of 55 and is blind (within the meaning of "blindness" as defined in section 416(i)(1) of this title), inability by reason of such blindness to engage in substantial gainful activity, requiring skills or ability comparable to those of any gainful activity in which he has previously engaged with some regularity and over a substantial period of time.

- Has a developmental disability as defined in the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 [42 U.S.C.15002(8)], which defines developmental disability in functional terms as follows:

  (A) In General

  The term "developmental disability" means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that:

  (i) is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;

  (ii) is manifested before the individual attains age 22;

  (iii) is likely to continue indefinitely;

  (iv) results in substantial functional limitations in 3 or more of the following areas of major life activity: (I) Self-care, (II) Receptive and expressive language, (III) Learning, (IV) Mobility, (V) Self-direction, (VI) Capacity for independent living, (VII) Economic self-sufficiency; and

  (v) reflects the individual's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

(B) Infants and Young Children

An individual from birth to age 9, inclusive, who has a substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired condition, may be considered to have a developmental disability without meeting 3 or more of the criteria described in clauses (i) through (v) of subparagraph (A) if the individual, without services and supports, has a high probability of meeting those criteria later in life.

- Has a physical, mental, or emotional impairment that is expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration, substantially impedes their ability to live independently, and is of such a nature that the ability to live independently could be improved by more suitable housing conditions.

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

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

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

Individual with Handicaps [24 CFR 8.3]

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

(1) Physical or mental impairment includes:

(a) Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genito-urinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; or

(b) Any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities. The term physical or mental impairment includes, but is not limited to, such diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, autism,

epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental retardation, emotional illness, drug addiction and alcoholism.

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

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

(4) *Is regarded as having an impairment* means:

(a) Has a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit one or more major life activities but that is treated by a recipient as constituting such a limitation;

(b) Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities only as a result of the attitudes of others toward such impairment; or

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

EXHIBIT 3-2: DEFINITION OF INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION [20 U.S.C. 1001 and 1002]

Eligibility of Students for Assisted Housing Under Section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937; Supplementary Guidance; Notice [Federal Register, April 10, 2006]

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

Definition of ''Institution of Higher Education'' From 20 U.S.C. 1001

(a) Institution of higher education. For purposes of this chapter, other than subchapter IV and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of Title 42, the term ''institution of higher education'' means an educational institution in any State that

(1) Admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;

(2) Is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;

(3) Provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree;

(4) Is a public or other nonprofit institution; and

(5) Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted preaccreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary for the granting of preaccreditation status, and the Secretary has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.

(b) Additional institutions included. For purposes of this chapter, other than subchapter IV and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of Title 42, the term ''institution of higher education'' also includes—

(1) Any school that provides not less than a 1-year program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation and that meets the provision of paragraphs (1), (2), (4), and (5) of subsection (a) of this section; and

(2) A public or nonprofit private educational institution in any State that, in lieu of the requirement in subsection (a)(1) of this section, admits as regular students persons who

are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the institution is located.

(c) List of accrediting agencies. For purposes of this section and section 1002 of this title, the Secretary shall publish a list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies or associations that the Secretary determines, pursuant to subpart 2 of part G of subchapter IV of this chapter, to be reliable authority as to the quality of the education or training offered.

Definition of ''Institution of Higher Education'' From 20 U.S.C. 1002

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

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

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

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

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

(2) Institutions outside the United States

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

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

(I)(aa) At least 60 percent of those enrolled in, and at least 60 percent of the graduates of, the graduate medical school outside the United States were not persons described in section 1091(a)(5) of this title in the year preceding the

year for which a student is seeking a loan under part B of subchapter IV of this chapter; and

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

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

(ii) In the case of a veterinary school located outside the United States that does not meet the requirements of section 1001(a)(4) of this title, the institution's students complete their clinical training at an approved veterinary school located in the United States.

(B) Advisory panel

(i) In general. For the purpose of qualifying as an institution under paragraph (1)(C) of this subsection, the Secretary shall establish an advisory panel of medical experts that shall—

(I) Evaluate the standards of accreditation applied to applicant foreign medical schools; and

(II) Determine the comparability of those standards to standards for accreditation applied to United States medical schools.

(ii) Special rule if the accreditation standards described in clause (i) are determined not to be comparable, the foreign medical school shall be required to meet the requirements of section 1001 of this title.

(C) Failure to release information. The failure of an institution outside the United States to provide, release, or authorize release to the Secretary of such information as may be required by subparagraph (A) shall render such institution ineligible for the purpose of part B of subchapter IV of this chapter.

(D) Special rule. If, pursuant to this paragraph, an institution loses eligibility to participate in the programs under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42, then a student enrolled at such institution may, notwithstanding such loss of eligibility, continue to be eligible to receive a loan under part B while

attending such institution for the academic year succeeding the academic year in which such loss of eligibility occurred.

(3) Limitations based on course of study or enrollment. An institution shall not be considered to meet the definition of an institution of higher education in paragraph (1) if such institution—

(A) Offers more than 50 percent of such institution's courses by correspondence, unless the institution is an institution that meets the definition in section 2471 (4)(C) of this title;

(B) Enrolls 50 percent or more of the institution's students in correspondence courses, unless the institution is an institution that meets the definition in such section, except that the Secretary, at the request of such institution, may waive the applicability of this subparagraph to such institution for good cause, as determined by the Secretary in the case of an institution of higher education that provides a 2-or 4-year program of instruction (or both) for which the institution awards an associate or baccalaureate degree, respectively;

(C) Has a student enrollment in which more than 25 percent of the students are incarcerated, except that the Secretary may waive the limitation contained in this subparagraph for a nonprofit institution that provides a 2-or 4-year program of instruction (or both) for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree, or an associate's degree or a postsecondary diploma, respectively; or

(D) Has a student enrollment in which more than 50 percent of the students do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and does not provide a 2-or 4-year program of instruction (or both) for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or an associate's degree, respectively, except that the Secretary may waive the limitation contained in this subparagraph if a nonprofit institution demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary that the institution exceeds such limitation because the institution serves, through contracts with Federal, State, or local government agencies, significant numbers of students who do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

(4) Limitations based on management. An institution shall not be considered to meet the definition of an institution of higher education in paragraph (1) if—

(A) The institution, or an affiliate of the institution that has the power, by contract or ownership interest, to direct or cause the direction of the management or policies of the institution, has filed for bankruptcy, except that this paragraph shall not apply to a nonprofit institution, the primary function of which is to provide health care educational services (or an affiliate of such an institution that has the power, by

contract or ownership interest, to direct or cause the direction of the institution's management or policies) that files for bankruptcy under chapter 11 of title 11 between July 1, 1998, and December 1, 1998; or

(B) The institution, the institution's owner, or the institution's chief executive officer has been convicted of, or has pled nolo contendere or guilty to, a crime involving the acquisition, use, or expenditure of funds under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42, or has been judicially determined to have committed fraud involving funds under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42.

(5) Certification. The Secretary shall certify an institution's qualification as an institution of higher education in accordance with the requirements of subpart 3 of part G of subchapter IV of this chapter.

(6) Loss of eligibility. An institution of higher education shall not be considered to meet the definition of an institution of higher education in paragraph (1) if such institution is removed from eligibility for funds under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 as a result of an action pursuant to part G of subchapter IV of this chapter.

(b) Proprietary institution of higher education

(1) Principal criteria. For the purpose of this section, the term ''proprietary institution of higher education'' means a school that—

(A) Provides an eligible program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation;

(B) Meets the requirements of paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1001 (a) of this title;

(C) Does not meet the requirement of paragraph (4) of section 1001 (a) of this title;

(D) Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association recognized by the Secretary pursuant to part G of subchapter IV of this chapter;

(E) Has been in existence for at least 2 years; and

(F) Has at least 10 percent of the school's revenues from sources that are not derived from funds provided under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42, as determined in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary.

(2) Additional institutions. The term ''proprietary institution of higher education'' also includes a proprietary educational institution in any State that, in lieu of the requirement

in paragraph (1) of section 1001 (a) of this title, admits as regular students persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the institution is located.

(c) Postsecondary vocational institution.

(1) Principal criteria. For the purpose of this section, the term ‘‘postsecondary vocational institution’’ means a school that—

(A) Provides an eligible program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation;

(B) Meets the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), (4), and (5) of section 1001 (a) of this title; and

(C) Has been in existence for at least 2 years.

(2) Additional institutions. The term ‘‘postsecondary vocational institution’’ also includes an educational institution in any State that, in lieu of the requirement in paragraph (1) of section 1001 (a) of this title, admits as regular students persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the institution is located.

RESERVED

Chapter 4

APPLICATIONS, WAITING LIST AND TENANT SELECTION

INTRODUCTION

When a family wishes to receive Section 8 HCV assistance, the family must submit an application that provides Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) with the information needed to determine the family's eligibility. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires OHFA to place all eligible families that apply for assistance on a waiting list. When HCV assistance becomes available, OHFA must select eligible families from the waiting list in accordance with HUD requirements and OHFA policies as stated in the administrative plan and the annual plan.

OHFA is required to adopt a clear approach to accepting applications, placing families on the waiting list, selecting families from the waiting list and must follow this approach consistently. The actual order in which families are selected from the waiting list can be affected if a family has certain characteristics designated by HUD or OHFA to receive preferential treatment. Funding earmarked exclusively for families with particular characteristics may also alter the order in which families are served.

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

This chapter describes HUD and OHFA policies for taking applications, managing the waiting list, and selecting eligible families for HCV assistance. The policies outlined in this chapter are organized into three sections, as follows:

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

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

Part III: Selection for HCV Assistance. This part describes the policies that guide OHFA in selecting eligible families for HCV assistance as such assistance becomes available. It

also specifies how in-person interviews will be used to ensure that OHFA has the information needed to make a final eligibility determination.

PART I: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

4-I.A. OVERVIEW

This part describes the policies that guide OHFA's efforts to distribute and accept applications, and to make preliminary determinations of applicant family eligibility that affect placement of the family on the waiting list. This part also describes OHFA's obligation to ensure the accessibility of the application process to elderly persons, people with disabilities, and people with limited English proficiency (LEP).

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

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

OHFA initially will require families to provide only the information needed to make an initial assessment of the family's eligibility, and to determine the family's placement on the waiting list. The family will be required to provide all of the information necessary to establish family eligibility and level of assistance when the family is selected from the waiting list.

Families may complete and submit an application online at www.ohfa.org. Families may also obtain application forms from OHFA's office during normal business hours or request an application by mail for a form to be sent to the family via first class mail.

Completed applications must be returned to OHFA by mail, electronically, by fax, or submitted in person during normal business hours. Applications must be complete in order to be accepted by OHFA for processing. If an application is incomplete, OHFA will notify the family of the additional information required.

4-I.C. ACCESSIBILITY OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

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

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

Limited English Proficiency

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

4-I.D. PLACEMENT ON THE WAITING LIST

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

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

Ineligible for Placement on the Waiting List

> If OHFA can determine from the information provided that a family is ineligible, the family will not be placed on the waiting list. Where a family is determined to be ineligible, OHFA will send written notification of the ineligibility determination within 14 days of receiving a complete application. The notice will specify the reasons for ineligibility, and will inform the family of its right to request an informal review and explain the process for doing so (see Chapter 16).

Eligible for Placement on the Waiting List

OHFA will send written notification of the preliminary eligibility determination within 14 days of receiving a complete application.

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

Applicants will be placed on the waiting list according to any preference(s) for which they qualify, and the date and time their complete application is received by OHFA.

PART II: MANAGING THE WAITING LIST

4-II.A. OVERVIEW

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

OHFA will maintain a single waiting list for the HCV program.

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

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

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

OHFA will not merge the HCV waiting list with the waiting list for any other program that OHFA operates.

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

Closing the Waiting List

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

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

Reopening the Waiting List

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

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

The Oklahoman, The Black Chronicle, and Tulsa World

In the event of a state or federally declared disaster in Oklahoma, OHFA may accept applications from families rendered homeless due to the disaster when OHFA's HCV waiting list is closed to all others. A family applying for assistance due to a state or federally declared disaster will be required to provide a referral form from the American Red Cross or the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The referral form must include the address of a unit in the affected area. If the disaster is a federally declared disaster, in addition to a referral form, a FEMA application number and verification of eligibility of benefits must be provided.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4-II.E. REPORTING CHANGES IN FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES

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

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

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

Purging the Waiting List

The decision to withdraw an applicant family that includes a person with disabilities from the waiting list is subject to reasonable accommodation. If the applicant did not respond to an OHFA request for information or updates because of the family member's disability, OHFA must reinstate the applicant family to their former position on the waiting list [24 CFR 982.204(c)(2)].

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

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

The family's response must be in writing and may be delivered in person, electronically, by mail, or by fax. Responses should be postmarked or received by OHFA no later than 14 days from the date of OHFA's letter.

If the family fails to respond within 14 days, the family will be removed from the waiting list without further notice.

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

If the notice is returned by the post office with a forwarding address, the family's address will be updated in the system and the family remains on the waiting list.

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

Removal from the Waiting List

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

If a family is removed from the waiting list because OHFA has determined the family is not eligible for assistance, a notice will be sent to the family's address of record as well as to any alternate address provided on the initial application. The notice will state the reasons the family was removed from the waiting list and will inform the family how to request an informal review regarding OHFA's decision (see Chapter 16) [24 CFR 982.201(f)].

PART III: SELECTION FOR HCV ASSISTANCE

4-III.A. OVERVIEW

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

The order in which families receive assistance from the waiting list depends on the selection method chosen by OHFA and is impacted in part by any selection preferences that the family qualifies for. The source of HCV funding also may affect the order in which families are selected from the waiting list.

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

4-III.B. SELECTION AND HCV FUNDING SOURCES

Special Admissions [24 CFR 982.203]

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

Targeted Funding [24 CFR 982.204(e)]

HUD may award OHFA funding for a specified category of families on the waiting list. OHFA must use this funding only to assist the families within the specified category. Within this category of families, the order in which such families are assisted is determined according to the policies provided in Section 4-III.C.

OHFA administers the following types of targeted funding:

Tenant Protection Vouchers and Enhanced Vouchers

Through the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) initiative HUD will provide Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPVs) for youth eligible under the Family Unification Program (FUP), subject to availability. Per the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 (2019 Appropriations Act) (Public Law 116-6, approved February 15, 2019), TPV appropriated funds may be used for FUP under Section 8(x) of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(x)).

Through this targeted allocation, HUD is investing in local, cross-system collaborative efforts to prevent and end homelessness among youth with a current or prior history of child welfare involvement.

The Foster Youth to Independence Initiative requires community partners to coordinate, identify, target, and connect eligible youth at-risk of or experiencing homelessness to housing and related supports. This initiative calls for public housing agencies (PHAs), public child welfare agencies (PCWAs), and continuums of care (CoCs) to work together to determine the most appropriate intervention for each young person.

OHFA in collaboration with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) and the National Resource Agency for Youth Services (NRCYS) operating through the Oklahoma Successful Adulthood Program (OKSA) and the Yes I Can! (YIC) Resource and Referral Helpline will work together on this initiative.

OHFA must enter into a partnership agreement with a PCWA. There is no minimum number of tenant protection vouchers (TPVs) that must be requested; however, OHFA is limited to a maximum award of 25 vouchers in a fiscal year. An application for TPVs under this program may not occur until OHFA has received a referral of a FUP-eligible youth by the partnering PCWA. When OHFA's waiting list is closed, OHFA may continue to accept these referrals.

The provision of supportive services is not an eligible use of the HUD funding.

To be eligible for assistance under the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) initiative applicants must have a written referral from the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) and/or its designated partner determining that a child is at imminent risk of placement in out-of-home care or that a child in out-of-home care under the supervision of the public agency may be returned to his or her family, or that a youth is at least 18 years and not more than 24 years of age and left foster care, or will leave foster care within 90 days, in accordance with a transition plan described in section 475(5)(H) of the Social Security Act, and is homeless or is at risk of becoming homeless.

Regular HCV Funding

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

4-III.C. SELECTION METHOD

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

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

OHFA is permitted to establish local preferences, and to give priority to serving families that meet those criteria. HUD specifically authorizes and places restrictions on certain types of local preferences. HUD also permits OHFA to establish other local preferences, at its discretion. Any local preferences established must be consistent with the OHFA plan and the consolidated plan, and must be based on local housing needs and priorities that can be documented by generally accepted data sources.

OHFA offers the following local preferences:

OHFA will offer a preference to any family that has been terminated from its HCV program due to insufficient program funding. Disability Preference: This preference is extended to disabled persons or families with a disabled member as defined in this plan.

Proof of disability will be required at the time of placement on the waiting list. A disabled person must meet one of the following definitions:

> 42 U.S.C. Section 423 (d)(1) defines disability as (A) inability to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to result in death or which has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months. A disabled person whose physical impairment is expected to be long, continued and of indefinite duration and substantially impedes his or her ability to live independently, and is of such a nature that such a disability could be improved by more suitable housing; or (B) in the case of an individual who has attained the age of 55 and is blind (within the meaning of "blindness" as defined in section 416(i)(1) of this title), inability by reason of such blindness to engage in substantial gainful activity requiring skills or abilities comparable to those of any gainful activity in which he has previously engaged with some regularity and over a substantial period of time; or
>
> Is determined to have a development disability as defined in the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15002(8) -

The disabled person definition does not exclude persons who have the disease of AIDS or any conditions arising from the etiologic agent for the AIDS.

The disabled person definition does not include a person whose disability is based solely on any drug or alcohol dependence (for eligibility purposes).

Homeless Preference: A homeless family is defined as:

> Lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence; AND has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised public or private shelter providing temporary accommodations or a public or private place not ordinarily used as a sleeping accommodation for human beings; OR
>
> An individual or family who has been displaced due to a major disaster declared by the President of the United States AND receives temporary federal housing assistance within the state of Oklahoma AND has a valid personal federal disaster identification number issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
>
> An individual or family residing with friends or relatives on a temporary basis is not eligible for the homeless preference unless the family has been displaced due to a major disaster declared by the President of the United States AND has established residency

within the state of Oklahoma (employment, school enrollment, etc.) AND has a valid personal federal disaster identification number issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Youth aging out of foster care referred to OHFA by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS).

Victims of human trafficking may be included in the homeless definition that includes both sex and labor trafficking, as outlined in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), as amended (22 U.S.C. § 7102). These are defined as:

> *Sex trafficking* means the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; (and)
>
> *Labor trafficking* means the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

Homeless Verification:

To verify homeless eligibility, the homeless applicant must provide one of the following:

> A referral from the shelter that the applicant is residing at; or
>
> If the shelter is full, a statement from each local shelter in the county verifying that the shelters are unable to accommodate the applicant; or
>
> If the county does not have a shelter, a statement from DHS that the applicant is homeless and there are not any shelters in that county; or
>
> A referral from a Continuum of Care (CoC) entity certifying that a person is living on the street and/or other places not meant for human habitation; or
>
> An established domestic violence victim services provider referral certifying that the individual or family is fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and/or human trafficking.

Victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking who are displaced as a result of fleeing violence in the home will be included in the homeless definition if the following conditions are met [Notice PIH 2013-15]:

Has no other residence [Notice PIH 2013-15]; and

Lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, and faith-based or other social networks, to obtain other permanent housing [Notice PIH 2013-15]; and

The actual or threatened violence occurred within the past 90 days or be of a continuing nature; and

If victim of domestic violence, the actual or threatened physical violence is directed against the applicant or the applicant's family by a spouse or other household member who lives in the unit with the family. The abuser must still reside in the unit from which the victim was displaced. The applicant must certify that the abuser will not reside with the applicant.

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

OHFA may approve the return of the abuser to the household if a counselor, therapist, or other appropriate professional recommends, in writing, that the individual be allowed to reside with the family.

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

The homeless preference does not apply to any individual imprisoned.

An applicant who lives in a violent neighborhood or is fearful of other violence outside the household will not be included in the domestic violence definition.

Emergency Housing Voucher Program

OHFA's homeless preference definition includes participants currently receiving assistance through the Emergency Housing Voucher program administered by OHFA who are at risk of homelessness due to the anticipated termination of EHV program funding.

OHFA shall transfer EHV program participants to the HCV program as long as an EHV program participant agrees to the transfer by certifying in writing their election to transfer from the EHV program to the HCV program.

Families transferring from the EHV program to the HCV program will not be subject to HCV program applicant screening requirements as long as the EHV participant was admitted to the EHV program in full compliance with EHV screening requirements.

Families transferring from the EHV program to the HCV program must have an active EHV contract at the time the family is transferred to the HCV program. .

Families participating in EHV programs administered by agencies other than OHFA are not eligible to transfer from the EHV program to OHFA's HCV program.

SPECIAL REFERRAL PROCESS FOR HOMELESS AND DISABLED INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES (PIH NOTICE 2023-13 SECTION 11)

OHFA recognizes the critical housing needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness or those with a family member who meets the federal definition of disabled, as defined in this section (4-III.C). This policy establishes a special referral process to facilitate access to HCV assistance for these vulnerable populations through partnerships with select organizations. Referrals under this program allow for admissions to OHFA's general HCV program waiting list, even when the waiting list is closed, provided funding is available and admissions do not exceed OHFA's allocated voucher authority.

Organizations Approved to Submit Referrals

Qualified community partners, approved by OHFA, with expertise in serving homeless or disabled populations may submit referrals of eligible individuals and/or families to OHFA for placement on OHFA's HCV program waiting list. These organizations include but are not limited to the following:

- Continuum of Care (CoC) lead agencies or coordinated entry systems in Oklahoma.
- OKC Key to Home
- Mental Health Association of Oklahoma.
- Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA)
- Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS)
- Housing Solutions of Tulsa
- Local emergency shelters and domestic violence service providers
- Other organizations approved by OHFA staff on a case-by-case basis, provided the organization demonstrates capacity for accurate eligibility verification and compliance with HUD confidentiality requirements (e.g., 24 CFR 5.2007 for VAWA protections).

Organizations must enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OHFA outlining referral protocols, verification standards, and data-sharing agreements that are compliant with privacy laws, prior to OHFA's acceptance of referrals.

OHFA staff, with the Executive Director's approval, has authority to add organizations or remove organizations as approved referring agencies, as necessary, in order to timely serve eligible individuals and families.

SPECIAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Richard S. Lillard Emergency Housing Assistance Fund: OHFA shall commit $500,000 per fiscal year to be available for an Oklahoma disaster receiving a federal declaration and/or a disaster declared a state of emergency by the Governor of Oklahoma where a minimum of 25 families are impacted. No additional funds will be available within a fiscal year after the $500,000 has been exhausted.

Funds may only be used in Oklahoma.

Funds will only be disbursed in the fiscal year in which the disaster occurred.

Funds may be applied for up to 60 days after the disaster.

An eligible family may receive up to $1,500 per fiscal year for assistance with paying one-month's rent, security (rent) deposit, utility deposit(s), and/or hotel accommodations.

Funds will be disbursed directly to the housing or utility provider. Funds may not be "banked" for later use.

Disbursed funds are considered a grant and will not be required to be repaid to OHFA unless funds were disbursed as a result of a fraudulent claim.

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

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

Low-income families admitted to the program that are "continuously assisted" under the 1937 Housing Act [24 CFR 982.4(b)], as well as low-income or moderate-income families admitted to

the program that are displaced as a result of the prepayment of the mortgage or voluntary termination of an insurance contract on eligible low-income housing, are not counted for income targeting purposes [24 CFR 982.201(b)(2)(v)].

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

Order of Selection

OHFA's system of preferences may select families either according to the date and time of application, or by a random selection process [24 CFR 982.207(c)]. When selecting families from the waiting list, OHFA is required to use targeted funding to assist only those families who meet the specified criteria, and OHFA is not permitted to skip down the waiting list to a family that it can afford to subsidize when there are not sufficient funds to subsidize the family at the top of the waiting list [24 CFR 982.204(d) and (e)].

Families will be selected from the waiting list based on the targeted funding or selection preference(s) for which they qualify, and in accordance with OHFA's hierarchy of preferences, if applicable. Within each targeted funding or preference category, families will be selected on a first-come, first-served basis according to the date and time their complete application is received by OHFA. Documentation will be maintained by OHFA as to whether families on the list qualify for and are interested in targeted funding. If a higher placed family on the waiting list is not qualified or not interested in targeted funding, there will be a notation maintained so that OHFA does not have to ask higher placed families each time targeted selections are made.

4-III.D. NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION

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

OHFA will notify the family by mail when it is selected from the waiting list. The notice will inform the family of the following:

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

Who is required to attend the interview

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

Other documents and information that should be brought to the interview

If any letter is returned to OHFA with no forwarding address, the family will be dropped from the waiting list. No additional correspondence will be sent to the family's address of record. At this time, since OHFA does not have the necessary information to make an eligibility determination this action does not constitute a denial.

4-III.E. THE APPLICATION INTERVIEW

HUD recommends that OHFA obtain the information and documentation needed to make an eligibility determination through a private interview [HCV GB, pg. 4-16]. Being invited to attend an interview does not constitute admission to the program.

Assistance cannot be provided to the family until all SSN documentation requirements are met. However, if OHFA determines that an applicant family is otherwise eligible to participate in the program, the family may retain its place on the waiting list for a period of time determined by OHFA [Notice PIH 2018-24].

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

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

The head of household, spouse/cohead, and each household member 18 years of age or older must attend the interview and provide appropriate documentation of legal identity. (Chapter 7 provides a discussion of proper documentation of legal identity). If the family does not provide the required documentation, the appointment may be rescheduled when the proper documents have been obtained.

Pending disclosure and documentation of social security numbers, OHFA will allow the family to retain its place on the waiting list for **up to 90 days**. If not all household members have disclosed their SSNs at the next time OHFA is issuing vouchers, OHFA will issue a voucher to the next eligible applicant family on the waiting list.

The family must provide the information necessary to establish the family's eligibility and determine the appropriate level of assistance, as well as completing required forms, providing required signatures, and submitting required documentation. If any materials

are missing, OHFA will provide the family with a written list of items that must be submitted.

Any required documents or information that the family is unable to provide at the interview must be provided within 14 days of the interview (Chapter 7 provides details about longer submission deadlines for particular items, including documentation of Social Security numbers and eligible noncitizen status). If the family is unable to obtain the information or materials within the required time frame, the family may request an extension. If the required documents and information are not provided within the required time frame (plus any extensions), the family will be sent a notice of denial (See Chapter 3).

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

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

Applicants who fail to attend the first scheduled briefing must call OHFA at 405-848-1144 or 800-256-1489 extension 1011 (initial certification rescheduling line) on or before the appointment date or they will be dropped from the waiting list. If the applicant calls on or before the appointment date of the first briefing, OHFA will notify the family of the date and time of the second scheduled briefing. Applicants who fail to attend two scheduled briefings, without OHFA approval, will be denied assistance based on the family's failure to supply information needed to determine eligibility. A notice of denial will be issued in accordance with policies contained in Chapter 3.

4-III.F. COMPLETING THE APPLICATION PROCESS

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

If OHFA determines that the family is ineligible, OHFA will send written notification of the ineligibility determination within 14 days of the determination. The notice will specify the reasons for ineligibility, and will inform the family of its right to request an informal review (Chapter 16).

If a family fails to qualify for any criteria that affected the order in which it was selected from the waiting list (e.g., targeted funding, extremely low-income), the family will be

returned to its original position on the waiting list. OHFA will notify the family in writing that it has been returned to the waiting list, and will specify the reasons for it.

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

Chapter 5

BRIEFINGS AND VOUCHER ISSUANCE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the briefing and voucher issuance process. When a family is determined to be eligible for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) must ensure that the family fully understands the way the program operates and the family's obligations under the program. This is accomplished through both an oral briefing and provision of a briefing packet containing written documentation of information the family needs to know. Once the family is fully informed of the program's requirements, OHFA issues the family a voucher. The voucher includes the unit size the family qualifies for based on OHFA's subsidy standards, as well as the dates of issuance and expiration of the voucher. The voucher is the document that permits the family to begin its search for a unit, and limits the amount of time the family has to successfully locate an acceptable unit.

This chapter describes U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations and OHFA policies related to these topics in two parts:

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

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

PART I: BRIEFINGS AND FAMILY OBLIGATIONS

5-I.A. OVERVIEW

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

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

Notification of Briefing

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

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

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

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

In-Person Briefings

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

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

Generally, the head of household is required to attend the briefing. If the head of household is unable to attend, the PHA may approve another adult family member to attend the briefing.

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

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

Attendance

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

Remote Briefings [Notice PIH 2020-32]

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

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

In addition, OHFA will conduct a briefing remotely upon request of the applicant as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability, if an applicant does not have childcare or transportation that would enable them to attend the briefing, or if the applicant believes an in-person briefing would create an undue health risk. OHFA will consider other reasonable requests for a remote briefing on a case-by-case basis.

Accessibility Requirements for Persons with Disabilities and LEP Individuals

As with in-person briefings, the platform for conducting remote briefings must be accessible and the briefing conducted in accordance with Section 504 and accessibility requirements. This includes ensuring any information, websites, emails, digital notifications, and other virtual platforms are accessible for persons with vision, hearing, and other disabilities. Further, providing effective communication in a digital context may require the use of individualized auxiliary aids or services, such as audio description, captioning, sign language and other types of interpreters, keyboard accessibility, accessible documents, screen reader support, and transcripts. Auxiliary aids or services must be provided in accessible formats, in a timely manner, and in such a way to protect the privacy and independence of the individual.

If no method of conducting a remote briefing is available that appropriately accommodates an individual's disability, OHFA may not hold against the individual their inability to participate in the remote briefing, and the OHFA should consider whether postponing the remote briefing to a later date is appropriate or whether there is a suitable alternative.

Due to the individualized nature of disability, the appropriate auxiliary aid or service necessary, or reasonable accommodation, will depend on the specific circumstances.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) requirements also apply to remote briefings, including the use of interpretation services and document translation. See Chapter 2 for a more thorough discussion of accessibility and LEP requirements, all of which apply in the context of remote briefings.

Conducting Remote Briefings

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

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At least 10 business days prior to scheduling the remote briefing, the OHFA will provide written notification via first class mail to families participating in the briefing to advise of technological requirements and to request the family notify OHFA of any known barriers. If any family does not respond within five business days, or if the written notification is returned by the post office or the email is rejected, OHFA will contact the family by telephone to identify potential technological barriers and to determine which technology resources are accessible to the family. OHFA will resolve any barriers using the guidance in Section 6 of Notice PIH 2020-32, including offering the family the opportunity to attend an in-person briefing or have a one-on-one briefing over the phone, as appropriate.

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

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

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

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

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

Oral Briefing [24 CFR 982.301(a)]

Each briefing must provide information on the following subjects:

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

Briefing Packet [24 CFR 982.301(b); New HCV GB, Housing Search and Leasing, p.7]

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

- The term of the voucher, voucher suspensions, and OHFA's policies on any extensions of the term. If OHFA allows extensions, the packet must explain how the family can request an extension.
- A description of the method used to calculate the housing assistance payment for a family, including how OHFA determines the payment standard for a family, how OHFA determines total tenant payment for a family, and information on the payment standard and utility allowance schedule.
- An explanation of how OHFA determines the maximum allowable rent for an assisted unit.
- Where the family may lease a unit and an explanation of how portability works, including information on how portability may affect the family's assistance through screening, subsidy standards, payment standards, and any other elements of the portability process. OHFA will not allow a family to exercise portability unless the family has resided in OHFA's jurisdiction for at least one year immediately preceding the request to move. The Violence

Against Women Act (VAWA) provides an exception to this rule. If a family has requested to utilize portability in order to protect the health or safety of a person who is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, OHFA will approve the portability request once the required documentation has been received.

- OHFA may deny a family's request for portability if portability could create a financial hardship for OHFA.
- The HUD-required tenancy addendum, which must be included in the lease.
- The form the family must use to request approval of tenancy**,** and a description of the procedure for requesting approval for a tenancy.
- A statement of OHFA's policy on providing information about families to prospective owners.
- OHFA's subsidy standards including when and how exceptions are made.
- Information on how to select a unit.
- Information on federal, state and local equal opportunity laws and a copy of the housing discrimination complaint form, including information on how to complete the form and file a fair housing complaint.
- A list of landlords who may be willing to lease a unit to the family or other resources (e.g., newspapers, organizations, online search tools) that may help families find units, including units outside areas of poverty or minority concentration.
- Notice that if the family includes a person with disabilities, the family may request a list of available accessible units known to OHFA.
- The family obligations under the program,including any obligations of a welfare-to-work family, and any obligations of other special programs if the family is participating in one of those programs.
- The grounds on which OHFA may terminate assistance for a participant family because of family action or failure to act.
- OHFA informal review procedures including when OHFA is required to offer a participant family the opportunity for an informal review, and how to request the review.
- An explanation of the advantages of moving to an area that does not have a high concentration of low-income families.

- The HUD pamphlet on lead-based paint entitled, "Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home[1]

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

- Maps showing areas with housing opportunities outside areas of poverty or minority concentration, both within its jurisdiction and its neighboring jurisdiction

- Information about the characteristics of these areas including job opportunities, schools, transportation, and other services

- An explanation of how portability works

Additional Items to Be Included in the Briefing Packet

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

OHFA will provide the following additional materials in the briefing packet:

The HUD pamphlet on lead-based paint entitled *"Protect Your Family From Lead In Your Home"*

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

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

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

"What You Should Know about EIV," a guide to the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system published by HUD as an attachment to Notice PIH 2017-12

5-I.C. FAMILY OBLIGATIONS

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

Time Frames for Reporting Changes Required By Family Obligations

Unless otherwise noted below, when family obligations require the family to respond to a request the response is due within 14 days. However, if you are required to notify OHFA of a change, notifying OHFA of the change within 30 days is considered prompt notice.

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

Family Obligations [24 CFR 982.551]

Following is a listing of a participant family's obligations under the HCV program:

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

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

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

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

OHFA will determine if a family has committed serious or repeated violations of the lease based on available evidence, including but not limited to, a court-ordered eviction or an owner's notice to evict.

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

- The family must notify OHFA and the owner before moving out of the unit or terminating the lease. The family must comply with lease requirements regarding written notice to the owner. The family must provide written notice to OHFA at the same time the owner is notified.

- The family must promptly give OHFA a copy of any owner eviction notice.

- The family must use the assisted unit for residence by the family. The unit must be the family's only residence.

- The composition of the assisted family residing in the unit must be approved by OHFA. The family must promptly notify OHFA in writing of the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child. The family must request OHFA approval to add any other family member as an occupant of the unit.

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

- However, children who join the family as a result of birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody, the family must notify OHFA by the next annual recertification.

- The family must provide OHFA written notice within 30 days when someone no longer lives in the unit. If OHFA has given approval, a foster child or a live-in aide may reside in the unit. OHFA has the discretion to adopt reasonable policies concerning residency by a foster child or a live-in aide, and to define when OHFA consent may be given or denied. For policies related to the request and approval/disapproval of foster children, foster adults, and live-in aides, see Chapter 3 (sections I.K and I.M), and Chapter 11 (section II.B).

- The family must not sublease the unit, assign the lease, or transfer the unit.

Subleasing includes receiving payment to cover rent and utility costs by a person living in the unit who is not listed as a family member.

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

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

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

PART II: SUBSIDY STANDARDS AND VOUCHER ISSUANCE

5-II.A. OVERVIEW

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

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

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

The following requirements apply when OHFA determines family unit size:

- The subsidy standards must provide for the smallest number of bedrooms needed to house a family without overcrowding.
- The subsidy standards must be consistent with space requirements under the housing quality standards.
- The subsidy standards must be applied consistently for all families of like size and composition.
- A child who is temporarily away from the home because of placement in foster care is considered a member of the family in determining the family unit size.
- A family that consists of a pregnant woman (with no other persons) must be treated as a two-person family.
- Any live-in aide (approved by OHFA to reside in the unit to care for a family member who is disabled or is at least 50 years of age) must be counted in determining the family unit size. No additional bedrooms are provided for the live-in aide's family.
- Unless a live-in-aide resides with a family, the family unit size for any family consisting of a single person must be either a zero- or one-bedroom unit, as determined under OHFA's subsidy standards.
- For subsidy standards, an adult is a person 18 years old or older.

- The Head of Household (HOH) and spouse will be allocated a separate bedroom from other members of the household.
- Separate bedrooms will be allocated to persons of the opposite sex, other than adults who have a spousal relationship.
- Separate bedrooms will be allocated for unrelated adults.
- Foster children will be included in determining unit size only if they will be in the unit for more than 6 months.
- Space will not be provided for a child who is away at school but who lives with the family during school recess.
- Space will not be provided for a family member who will be absent most of the time, such as a member who is away in the military.
- Space will not be provided for a child subject to a custody agreement who is with the family less than 51% of the time (183 days).

Generally, OHFA assigns one bedroom for each two persons within the household, except in the following circumstances:

Persons of the opposite sex (other than adults that have a spousal relationship) will be allocated separate bedrooms.

Live-in aides will be allocated a separate bedroom.

Single person families will be allocated one bedroom.

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

Voucher Size	**Persons in Household (Minimum – Maximum)**
0 Bedroom	1-2
1 Bedroom	1-4
2 Bedrooms	2-6
3 Bedrooms	3-8
4 Bedrooms	4-10
5 Bedrooms	6-12
6 Bedrooms	8-14

5-II.C. EXCEPTIONS TO SUBSIDY STANDARDS

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

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

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

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

The family must request any exception to the subsidy standards in writing. The request must explain the need or justification for a larger family unit size, and must include appropriate documentation. Requests based on health-related reasons must be verified by a knowledgeable professional source (e.g., doctor or health professional), unless the disability and the disability–related request for accommodation is readily apparent or otherwise known.

As a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities, OHFA may approve an additional bedroom for required medical equipment. These limited exceptions must be verified as necessary by a knowledgeable professional source (e.g., doctor or health professional). The family's continued need for an additional bedroom due to special medical equipment must be verified during unit inspections. The actual medical equipment will be verified to ensure the extra bedroom is being used for the intended purpose. Otherwise, OHFA must reduce the subsidy standard and corresponding payment standard.

Once the voucher has been issued, OHFA will not issue the family a larger voucher because of an addition to the family's household until the family's annual recertification; unless the addition is due to birth, adoption of a minor, or court-awarded custody of a minor.

OHFA will notify the family of its determination within 14 days of receiving the family's request. If a participant family's request is denied, the notice will inform the family of their right to request an informal hearing.

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

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

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

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

> Vouchers will be issued to eligible applicants after verifying the family's composition, income, and allowances.
>
> If there is an addition to the family's household after the voucher has been issued, OHFA will not issue the family a larger voucher because of an addition to the family's household until the family's annual recertification; unless the addition is due to birth, adoption of a minor, or court-awarded custody of a minor.

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

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

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

Changes for Participants

The members of the family residing in the unit must be approved by OHFA. The family must obtain approval of any additional adult family member before the new member occupies the unit. Additions to the household resulting from birth, adoption of a minor or court-awarded custody of a minor must be reported to OHFA, in writing, by the family's next annual recertification.

A family's voucher size may be increased only during the annual recertification process. If there is an addition to the family's household once the annual recertification process has been completed, OHFA will not increase the family's voucher size until the family's next annual recertification unless the addition is due to birth, adoption of a minor, or court-awarded custody of a minor.

OHFA will decrease the family's voucher size upon completion of the family's annual recertification; whenever, there is a decrease in the family's household.

Underhoused Families

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

Unit Size Selected [24 CFR 982.402(c)]

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

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

Utility Allowance: The utility allowance used to calculate the gross rent is based on the actual size of the unit the family selects or the voucher bedroom size that the family qualifies for under OHFA's subsidy standards, whichever is lower.

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

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

5-II.E. VOUCHER TERM AND EXTENSIONS

Voucher Term [24 CFR 982.303]

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

The initial voucher term will be 60 calendar days.

The family must submit a Scheduling Appointment Request Form (SARF) within the 60-day period unless OHFA grants an extension.

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

OHFA has the authority to grant extensions of search time, to specify the length of an extension, and to determine the circumstances under which extensions will be granted. There is no limit on the number of extensions that OHFA can approve.

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

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

OHFA may approve one 60-day extension.

OHFA will approve additional extensions only in the following circumstances:

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

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

Serious illness or death in the family

Other family emergency

Obstacles due to employment

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

Whether family size or other special requirements make finding a unit difficult

Any request for an additional extension must include the reason(s) an additional extension is necessary. OHFA may require the family to provide documentation to support the request.

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

OHFA will decide whether to approve or deny an extension request within 14 days of the date the request is received, and will provide the family written notice of its decision.

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

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

When a Scheduling Appointment Request Form is received by OHFA, the term of the voucher will be suspended while OHFA processes the request.

Expiration of Voucher Term

Once a family's housing choice voucher term (including any extensions) expires, the family is no longer eligible to search for housing under the program. If the family still wishes to receive assistance, OHFA will require that the family reapply. Such a family does not become ineligible for the program on the grounds that it was unable to locate a unit before the voucher expired [HCV GB p. 8-13].

If an applicant family's voucher term or extension expires before the family has submitted a Scheduling Appointment Request Form (SARF), OHFA will require the family to reapply for assistance. If an SARF that was submitted prior to the expiration date of the voucher is subsequently disapproved by OHFA (after the voucher term has expired), the family will be required to reapply for assistance.

Within 14 days after the expiration of the voucher term or any extension, OHFA will notify the family in writing that the voucher term has expired and that the family must reapply in order to be placed on the waiting list.

Chapter 6

INCOME AND SUBSIDY DETERMINATIONS

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

INTRODUCTION

A family's income determines eligibility for assistance and is also used to calculate the family's payment and OHFA's subsidy. OHFA will use the policies and methods described in this chapter to ensure that only eligible families receive assistance and that no family pays more or less than its obligation under the regulations. This chapter describes HUD regulations and OHFA policies related to these topics in three parts as follows:

Part I: Annual Income. HUD regulations specify the sources of income which are excluded from the family's annual income. These requirements and OHFA policies for calculating annual income are found in Part I.

Part II: Assets. HUD regulations specify the types of assets which are excluded from a family's annual income. These requirements and OHFA policies for calculating income from assets are found in Part II.

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

Part IV: Calculating Family Share and PHA Subsidy. This part describes the statutory formula for calculating total tenant payment (TTP), the use of utility allowances, and the methodology for determining OHFA subsidy and required family payment.

PART I: ANNUAL INCOME

6-I.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR 5.609]

Annual income includes:

- All amounts, not specifically excluded in 24 CFR 5.609(b);
- All amounts received from all sources (other than those specifically excluded in 24 CFR 5.609(b)) by each member of the family who is 18 years of age or older or is the head of household or spouse;
- Unearned income (other than those sources specifically excluded in 24 CFR 5.609(b)) by or on behalf of each dependent who is under 18 years of age; and
- Imputed returns of an asset based on the current passbook savings rate, as determined by HUD, when the value of net family assets exceeds $50,000 (which amount HUD will adjust annually) and the actual returns from a given asset cannot be calculated.

In addition to this general definition, the regulations at 24 CFR 5.609(b) provide a comprehensive listing of all sources of income that are excluded from annual income. Note, unlike in previous versions of the regulations, the current regulations governing annual income do not list sources of income that are to be included. Instead, HUD relies on the definition of excluded income under 24 CFR 5.609(b) to provide the scope of what is included. To that end, generally, all income is included unless it is specifically excluded by regulation.

Annual income includes "all amounts received," not the amount that a family may be legally entitled to receive but did not receive. For example, a family's child support or alimony income must be based on payments received, not the amounts to which the family is entitled by court or agency orders. However, when a family member's wages or benefits are garnished, levied, or withheld to pay restitution, child support, tax debt, student loan debt, or other applicable debts, OHFA must use the gross amount of the income, prior to the reduction, to determine a family's annual income [Notice PIH 2023-27].

Annual income also includes all actual anticipated income from assets (provided the income is not otherwise excluded) even if the asset itself is excluded from net family assets [Notice PIH 2023-27]. 24 CFR 5.603(b)(1) describes HUD regulations for treating specific types of income and assets. The full texts of those portions of the regulations are provided in exhibits at the end of this chapter as follows:

- Annual Income Full Definition (Exhibit 6-1)
- Treatment of Family Assets (Exhibit 6-2)
- The Effect of Welfare Benefit Reduction (Exhibit 6-3)

Sections 6-I.B and 6-I.C discuss general requirements and methods for calculating annual income. The rest of this section describes how each source of income is treated for the purposes of determining annual income. Verification requirements for annual income are discussed in Chapter 7.

6-I.B. HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND INCOME

Overview

Income received by all family members must be counted unless specifically excluded by the regulations. It is the responsibility of the head of household to report changes in family composition in accordance with HUD regulations and OHFA policies in Chapter 11. The rules on which sources of income are counted vary somewhat by family member. The chart below summarizes how family composition affects income determinations.

Summary of Income Included and Excluded by Person	
Live-in aides	Income from all sources (both earned and unearned) is excluded [24 CFR 5.609(b)(8)].
Foster child or foster adult	Income from all sources (both earned and unearned) is excluded [24 CFR 5.609(b)(8)].
Head, spouse, or cohead Other adult family members	All sources of income not specifically excluded by the regulations are included [24 CFR 5.609(a)].
Minors	Earned income of children under 18 years of age is excluded [24 CFR 5.609(b)(3)]. All sources of unearned income, except those specifically excluded by the regulations, are included [24 CFR 5.609(a)].
Full-time students 18 years of age or older (not head, spouse, or cohead)	Earned income in excess of the dependent deduction is excluded [24 CFR 5.609(b)(14)]. All sources of unearned income, except those specifically excluded by the regulations, are included.

Temporarily Absent Family Members

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

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

Absent Students

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

Court Ordered Absences

If a member of the family, other than the HOH, is subject to a court order that restricts the member from the home, the family member will no longer be considered a member of the household. If the family member intends to return to the household, the family member will be subject to the eligibility and screening requirements discussed in Chapter 3 of this plan.

OHFA must approve all additions to the household, including the addition of family members formerly a part of the assisted household.

Absences Due to Placement in Foster Care

Children temporarily absent from the home as a result of placement in foster care (as confirmed by the state child welfare agency) are considered members of the family [24 CFR 5.403].

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

Absent Head, Spouse, or Cohead

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

Absences Due to Incarceration

OHFA will initiate termination of assistance for families where the HOH has been incarcerated more than 30 consecutive days for committing a non-violent, non-drug related criminal act. If the HOH has been incarcerated for committing a violent or drug related act, OHFA will initiate termination of assistance.

If a family member, other than the HOH, is expected to be incarcerated for more than 30 consecutive days (for non-violent, non-drug related criminal activity), the family member will be removed as a member of the household. If the family member intends to return to the unit following incarceration, the individual is subject to the eligibility and screening requirements discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

A family member incarcerated for committing a violent or drug-related criminal act will subject the entire family to termination from the program.

OHFA must pre-approve all additions to the household, including the addition of a family member formerly a part of the assisted household.

Family Members Permanently Confined for Medical Reasons

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

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

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

Joint Custody of Dependents

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

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

Children not subject to a joint custody agreement will be considered members of the household if the children are in the home "51% of the time." 51% is defined as 183 days of the year, which do not have to run consecutively.

Caretakers for a Child

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

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

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

(3) At any time that custody or guardianship legally has been awarded to a caretaker, the housing choice voucher will be transferred to the caretaker.

(4) During any period that a caretaker is considered a visitor, the income of the caretaker is not counted in annual income and the caretaker does not qualify the family for any deductions from income.

6-I.C. CALCULATING ANNUAL INCOME

The methodology used for calculating income differs depending on whether income is being calculated at initial occupancy, interim reexamination, or at annual reexamination. However, income from assets is always anticipated regardless of certification type.

Anticipating Annual Income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(1)]

At initial occupancy and for an interim reexamination of family income, OHFA is required to use anticipated income (current income) for the upcoming 12-month period following the new admission or interim reexamination effective date. Policies related to verifying income are found in Chapter 7.

When OHFA cannot readily anticipate income based upon current circumstances (e.g., in the case of temporary, sporadic, or variable employment, seasonal employment, unstable working hours, or suspected fraud), OHFA will review and analyze historical data for patterns of employment, paid benefits, and receipt of other income and use the results of this analysis to establish annual income.

Any time current circumstances are not used to project annual income, a clear rationale for the decision will be documented in the file. In all such cases the family may present information and documentation to OHFA to show why the historic pattern does not represent the family's anticipated income.

In all cases, the family file will be documented with a clear record of the reason for the decision, and a clear audit trail will be left as to how OHFA annualized projected income.

Known Changes in Income

If OHFA verifies an upcoming increase or decrease in income at admission or interim reexamination, annual income will be projected by applying each income amount to the appropriate part of the 12-month period.

Example: An employer reports that a full-time employee who has been receiving $8/hour will begin to receive $8.25/hour in the eighth week after the effective date of the new admission or interim reexamination. In such a case OHFA would calculate annual income as follows: ($8/hour × 40 hours × 7 weeks) + ($8.25 × 40 hours × 45 weeks).

The family may present information that demonstrates that implementing a change before its effective date would create a hardship for the family. In such cases OHFA will calculate annual income using current circumstances and then, should the change in income require OHFA to conduct an interim reexamination, conduct an interim reexamination in accordance with OHFA policy in Chapter 11.

Calculating Annual Income at Annual Reexamination [24 CFR.609(c)(2); Notice PIH 2023-27]

At annual reexamination, except where OHFA uses a streamlined income determination, OHFA must first determine the family's income for the previous 12-month period and use this amount as the family income for annual reexaminations; however, adjustments to reflect current income must be made. Any change of income since the family's last annual reexamination, including those that did not meet the threshold to process an interim reexamination of family income in accordance with OHFA policies in Chapter 11 and HUD regulations, must be considered. If, however, there have been no changes to income, then the amount of income calculated for the previous 12-month period is the amount that will be used to determine the family's rental assistance. Income from assets is always anticipated, irrespective of the income examination type. Policies related to conducting annual reexaminations are located in Chapter 11.

6-I.D. EARNED INCOME

Wages and Related Compensation [24 CFR 5.609(a); Notice PIH 2023-27]

The earned income of each member of the family who is 18 years of age or older, or who is the head of household or spouse/cohead regardless of age, is included in annual income. Income received as a day laborer or seasonal worker is also included in annual income, even if the source, date, or amount of the income varies [24 CFR 5.609 (b)(24)].

Earned income means income or earnings from wages, tips, salaries, other employee compensation, and net income from self-employment. Earned income does not include any pension or annuity, transfer payments (meaning payments made or income received in which no goods or services are being paid for, such as welfare, social security, and governmental subsidies for certain benefits), or any cash or in-kind benefits [24 CFR 5.100].

A *day laborer* is defined as an individual hired and paid one day at a time without an agreement that the individual will be hired or work again in the future [24 CFR 5.603(b)]. Income earned as a day laborer is not considered nonrecurring income.

A *seasonal worker* is defined as an individual who is hired into a short-term position (e.g., for which the customary employment period for the position is six months or fewer) and the employment begins about the same time each year (such as summer or winter). Typically, the individual is hired to address seasonal demands that arise for the particular employer or industry [24 CFR 5.603(b)]. Some examples of seasonal work include employment limited to holidays or agricultural seasons. Seasonal work may include but is not limited to employment as a lifeguard, ballpark vendor, or snowplow driver [Notice PIH 2023-27]. Income earned as a seasonal worker is not considered nonrecurring income.

> OHFA will include in annual income the full amount, before any payroll deductions, of wages and salaries, overtime pay, commissions, fees, tips and bonuses, and other compensation.
>
> For persons who regularly receive bonuses or commissions, OHFA will verify and then average amounts received for the two years preceding admission or interim reexamination. If only a one-year history is available, OHFA will use the prior year amounts. In either case the family may provide, and OHFA will consider, a credible justification for not using this history to anticipate future bonuses or commissions. If a new employee has not yet received any bonuses or commissions, the OHFA will count only the amount estimated by the employer. The file will be documented appropriately.

Military Pay

All regular pay, special pay and allowances of a member of the Armed Forces are counted <u>except</u> for the special pay to a family member serving in the Armed Forces who is exposed to hostile fire [24 CFR 5.609(b)(11)].

Earnings of a Minor [24 CFR 5.609(b)(3)]

A minor is a member of the family, other than the head of household or spouse, who is under 18 years of age. Employment income earned by minors is not included in annual income. All other sources of unearned income, except those specifically excluded by the regulations, are included.

Earned Income of Full-Time Students [24 CFR 5.609(b)(14)]

The earned income of a dependent full-time student in excess of the amount of the dependent deduction is excluded from annual income. All sources of unearned income, except those specifically excluded by the regulations, are included.

A family member other than the head of household or spouse/cohead is considered a full-time student if they are attending school or vocational training on a full-time basis [24 CFR 5.603(b)]. To be considered "full-time," a student must be considered "full-time" by an educational institution with a degree or certificate program [HCV GB, p. 5-29].

6-I.E. EARNED INCOME DISALLOWANCE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES [24 CFR 5.617; Streamlining Final Rule (SFR) Federal Register 3/8/16; Notice PIH 2023-27]

HOTMA removed the statutory authority for the EID. The EID is available only to families that are eligible for and participating on the program as of December 31, 2023, or before; no new families may be added on or after January 1, 2024. If a family is receiving the EID prior to or on the effective date of December 31, 2023, they are entitled to the full amount of the benefit for a full 24-month period. The policies below are applicable only to such families. No family will still be receiving the EID after December 31, 2025. The EID will sunset on January 1, 2026, and the PHA policies below will no longer be applicable as of that date or when the last qualifying family exhausts their exclusion period, whichever is sooner.

Calculation of the Disallowance

Calculation of the earned income disallowance for an eligible member of a qualified family begins with a comparison of the member's current income with their "baseline income." The family member's baseline income is their income immediately prior to qualifying for the EID. The family member's baseline income remains constant throughout the period that they are participating in the EID.

Calculation Method

Initial 12-Month Exclusion

During the initial exclusion period of 12 consecutive months, the full amount (100 percent) of any increase in income attributable to new employment or increased earnings is excluded.

> The initial EID exclusion period will begin on the first of the month following the date an eligible member of a qualified family is first employed or first experiences an increase in earnings.

Second 12-Month Exclusion

During the second exclusion period of 12 consecutive months, OHFA must exclude at least 50 percent of any increase in income attributable to employment or increased earnings.

> During the second 12-month exclusion period, OHFA will exclude 100 percent of any increase in income attributable to new employment or increased earnings.

Lifetime Limitation

The EID has a two-year (24-month) lifetime maximum. The two-year eligibility period begins at the same time that the initial exclusion period begins and ends 24 months later. During the 24-month period, an individual remains eligible for EID even if they begin to receive assistance from a different housing agency, move between public housing and Section 8 assistance, or have breaks in assistance. The EID will sunset on January 1, 2026. In no circumstances will a family member's exclusion period continue past January 1, 2026.

6-I.F. BUSINESS AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT INCOME [24 CFR 5.609(b)(28); Notice PIH 2023-27]

Annual income includes "net income from the operation of a business or profession. *Net income* is gross income minus business expenses that allows the business to operate. *Gross income* is all income amounts received into the business, prior to the deduction of business expenses.

Expenditures for business expansion or amortization of capital indebtedness may not be used as deductions in determining net income. An allowance for depreciation of assets used in a business or profession may be deducted, based on straight line depreciation, as provided in Internal Revenue Service regulations. Any withdrawal of cash or assets from the operation of a business or profession will be included in income, except to the extent the withdrawal is reimbursement of cash or assets invested in the operation by the family."

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

Independent Contractors

Income received as an independent contractor is included in annual income, even if the source, date, or amount of the income varies [24 CFR 5.609 (b)(24)].

An *independent contractor* is defined as an individual who qualifies as an independent contractor instead of an employee in accordance with the Internal Revenue Code Federal income tax requirements and whose earnings are consequently subject to the Self-Employment Tax. In general, an individual is an independent contractor if the payer has the right to control or direct only the result of the work and not what will be done and how it will be done [24 CFR 5.603(b)]. This may include individuals such as third-party delivery and transportation service providers and "gig workers" like babysitters, landscapers, rideshare drivers, and house cleaners. Income earned as an independent contractor is not considered nonrecurring income.

Business Expansion

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

> *Business expansion* is defined as any capital expenditures made to add new business activities, to expand current facilities, or to operate the business in additional locations. For example, purchase of a street sweeper by a construction business for the purpose of adding street cleaning to the services offered by the business would be considered a business expansion. Similarly, the purchase of a property by a hair care business to open at a second location would be considered a business expansion.

Capital Indebtedness

HUD regulations do not permit the OHFA to deduct from gross income the amortization of capital indebtedness.

Capital indebtedness is defined as the principal portion of the payment on a capital asset such as land, buildings, and machinery. This means OHFA will allow as a business expense interest, but not principal, paid on capital indebtedness.

Negative Business Income

If the net income from a business is negative, no business income will be included in annual income; a negative amount will not be used to offset other family income.

Withdrawal of Cash or Assets from a Business

HUD regulations require OHFA to include in annual income the withdrawal of cash or assets from the operation of a business or profession unless the withdrawal reimburses a family member for cash or assets invested in the business by the family.

Acceptable investments in a business include cash loans and contributions of assets or equipment. For example, if a member of an assisted family provided an up-front loan of $2,000 to help a business get started, the OHFA will not count as income any withdrawals from the business up to the amount of this loan until the loan has been repaid. Investments do not include the value of labor contributed to the business without compensation.

Co-owned Businesses

If a business is co-owned with someone outside the family, the family must document the share of the business it owns. If the family's share of the income is lower than its share of ownership, the family must document the reasons for the difference.

Assets Owned by a Business Entity

If a business entity (e.g., limited liability company or limited partnership) owns the asset, then the family's asset is their ownership stake in the business, not some portion of the business's assets. However, if the family holds the assets in their own name (e.g., they own one-third of a restaurant) rather than in the name of a business entity, then the percentage value of the asset owned by the family is what is counted toward net family assets (e.g., one-third of the value of the restaurant) [Notice PIH 2023-27].

6-I.G. STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE [FR Notice 2/14/23 and Notice PIH 2023-27]

Introduction

Section 479B of the Higher Education Act (HEA) requires that all assistance under Title IV of the HEA and Bureau of Indian Affairs student financial assistance, even assistance provided to students in excess of tuition and required fees or charges, be excluded from HUD income calculations.

For Section 8 programs only, however, for over 10 years through FY 2022, HUD appropriations have included a provision that for certain students receiving Section 8 assistance, any amounts received in excess of tuition and any other required fees and charges are considered income (with the exception of students who lived with their parents or who were over the age of 23 with a dependent child).

While the language in various consolidated appropriations acts is limited to federal fiscal year covered by the act, this does not rule out the possibility that similar language will be included in future years' appropriations bills.

- For any funds from a year where HUD's appropriations acts include this limitation, it will apply with respect to Section 8 participants. OHFA will follow the pre-HOTMA Section 8 student financial assistance limitation described below.
- During years in which an appropriations act does not contain this Section 8 student financial assistance limitation (or any other such limitation), then the determination of student financial assistance as included/excluded income for all Section 8 students defaults to the methodology described for the public housing program and listed below.

Pre-HOTMA Section 8 Student Financial Assistance Limitation [FR 4/10/06; Notice PIH 2015-21]

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

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

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

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

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

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

Any student financial assistance not subject to inclusion under the regulations is fully excluded from annual income, whether it is paid directly to the student or to the educational institution the student is attending. This includes any financial assistance received by:

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

HOTMA Student Financial Assistance Requirements [24 CFR 5.609(b)(9)]

The regulations under HOTMA distinguish between two categories of student financial assistance paid to both full-time and part-time students.

Types of Assistance

Any assistance to students under section 479B of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (Title IV of the HEA) must be excluded from the family's annual income [24 CFR 5.609(b)(9)(i)].

Examples of assistance under title IV of the HEA include:

- Federal Pell Grants;
- Teach Grants;
- Federal Work Study Programs;
- Federal Perkins Loans;
- Income earned in employment and training programs under section 134 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA); or
- Bureau of Indian Affairs/Education student assistance programs
    - The Higher Education Tribal Grant
    - The Tribally Controlled Colleges or Universities Grant Program

Any other grant-in-aid, scholarship, or other assistance amounts an individual receives for the actual covered costs charged by the institute of higher education (not otherwise excluded by the Federally mandated income exclusions) are excluded [24 CFR 5.609(b)(9)(ii)]. Other student financial assistance received by the student that, either by itself or in combination with HEA assistance, exceeds the actual covered costs is not excluded from income.

Actual covered costs are defined as the actual costs of:

- Tuition, books, and supplies;
    - Including supplies and equipment to support students with learning disabilities or other disabilities
- Room and board; and
- Other fees required and charged to a student by the education institution.

For a student who is not the head of household or spouse/cohead, actual covered costs also include the reasonable and actual costs of housing while attending the institution of higher education and not residing in an assisted unit.

Further, to qualify, other student financial assistance must be expressly:

- For tuition, book, supplies, room and board, or other fees required and charged to the student by the educational institution;
- To assist a student with the costs of higher education; or
- To assist a student who is not the head of household or spouse with the reasonable and actual costs of housing while attending the educational institution and not residing in an assisted unit.

The student financial assistance may be paid directly to the student or to the educational institution on the student's behalf. However, any student financial assistance paid to the student must be verified by OHFA.

The financial assistance must be a grant or scholarship received from:

- The Federal government;
- A state, tribal, or local government ;
- A private foundation registered as a nonprofit;
- A business entity (such as corporation, general partnership, limited liability company, limited partnership, joint venture, business trust, public benefit corporation, or nonprofit entity); or
- An institution of higher education.

Student financial assistance, does not include:

- Financial support provided to the student in the form of a fee for services performed; (e.g., a work study or teaching fellowship that is not excluded under section 479B of the Higher Education Act HEA);
- Gifts, including gifts from family or friends; or
- Any amount of the scholarship or grant that, either by itself or in combination with assistance excluded under the HEA, exceeds the actual covered costs of the student.

Calculating Income from Student Financial Assistance [HOTMA Student Financial Assistance Resource Sheet; Notice PIH 2023-27]

The formula for calculating the amount of other student financial assistance that is excluded from income always begins with deducting the assistance received under 479B of the HEA from the total actual covered costs, because the 479B assistance is intended to pay the student's actual covered costs. When a student receives assistance from both Title IV of the HEA and from other sources, the assistance received under Title IV of the HEA must be applied to the student's actual covered costs first and then other student financial assistance is applied to any remaining actual covered costs. Once actual costs are covered, any remaining student financial assistance is considered income.

If a student only receives financial assistance under Title IV of the HEA and does not receive any other student financial assistance, OHFA will exclude the full amount of the assistance received under Title IV from the family's annual income. OHFA will not calculate actual covered costs in this case.

If the student does not receive any assistance under Title IV of the HEA but does receive assistance from another source, OHFA will first calculate the actual covered costs to the student in accordance with 24 CFR 5.609(b)(ii). OHFA will then subtract the total amount of the student's financial assistance from the student's actual covered costs. OHFA will include any amount of financial assistance in excess of the student's actual covered costs in the family's annual income.

Example 1

- Actual covered costs: $20,000
- Other student financial assistance: $25,000
- Excluded income: $20,000 ($25,000 in financial assistance - $20,000 in actual covered costs)
- Included income: $5,000

When a student receives assistance from both Title IV of the HEA and from other sources, OHFA will first calculate the actual covered costs to the student in accordance with 24 CFR 5.609(b)(ii). The assistance received under Title IV of the HEA will be applied to the student's actual covered costs first and then the other student financial assistance will be applied to any remaining actual covered costs.

If the amount of assistance excluded under Title IV of the HEA equals or exceeds the actual covered costs, none of the assistance included under other student financial assistance" would be excluded from income.

Example 2

- Actual covered costs: $25,000
- Title IV HEA assistance: $26,000
- Title IV HEA assistance covers the students entire actual covered costs.
- Other Student Financial Assistance: $5,000
- Excluded income: The entire Title IV HEA assistance of $26,000
- Included income: All other financial assistance of $5,000

If the amount of assistance excluded under Title IV of the HEA is less than the actual covered costs, OHFA will exclude the amount of other student financial assistance up to the amount of the remaining actual covered costs.

Example 3

- Actual covered costs: $22,000
- Title IV HEA assistance: $15,000
- The remaining amount not covered by Title IV HEA assistance is $7,000 ($22,000 in actual covered costs - $15,000 in Title IV HEA assistance).
- Other Student Financial Assistance: $5,000
- $7,000 in remaining actual covered costs - $5,000 in other financial assistance
- Excluded income: $15,000 entire amount of the Title IV HEA Assistance + $5,000 in other financial assistance
- Included income: $0

Example 4

- Actual covered costs: $18,000
- Title IV HEA Assistance: $15,000
- The remaining amount not covered by Title IV HEA assistance is $3,000 ($18,000 in actual covered costs - $15,000 in Title IV HEA Assistance)
- Other student Financial Assistance: $5,000
- When other student financial assistance is applied, financial assistance exceeds actual covered costs by $2,000 ($3,000 in actual covered costs - $5,000 in other financial assistance).
- Included income: $2,000 (the amount by which the financial aid exceeds the student's actual covered costs).

6-I.H. PERIODIC PAYMENTS

Periodic payments are forms of income received on a regular basis.

Income that will not be repeated beyond the coming year (i.e., the 12 months following the effective date of the certification), based on information provided by the family, is considered nonrecurring income and is excluded from annual income. Income that has a discrete end date and will not be repeated beyond the coming year is excluded from a family's annual income because it is nonrecurring income. However, this does not include unemployment income and other types of periodic payments that are received at regular intervals (such as weekly, monthly, or yearly) for a period of greater than one year that can be extended. If unemployment income will not be repeated beyond the coming year, then it is excluded. For example, a family receives income from a guaranteed income program in their city that has a discrete beginning and end date. While the guaranteed income will be repeated in the coming year, it will end before the family's next annual reexamination. This income is fully excluded from annual income.

Insurance payments and settlements for personal or property losses, including but not limited to payments under health insurance, motor vehicle insurance, and workers' compensation, are excluded from annual income. Any workers' compensation is always excluded from annual income, regardless of the frequency or length of the payments.

Lump-Sum Payments for the Delayed Start of a Periodic Payment [24 CFR 5.609(b)(16)]

Deferred periodic amounts from Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security benefits that are received in a lump sum amount or in prospective monthly amounts, or any deferred Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability benefits that are received in a lump sum amount or in prospective monthly amounts are excluded from annual income.

OHFA will include in annual income lump sums received as a result of delays in processing periodic payments (other than those specifically excluded by the regulation), such as unemployment or welfare assistance.

When a delayed-start payment is received that is to be included and the family reports this during the period in which OHFA is processing an annual reexamination, the OHFA will adjust the family's rent retroactively for the period the payment was intended to cover.

If the delayed-start payment is received outside of the time the OHFA is processing an annual reexamination, then the OHFA will consider whether the amount meets the threshold to conduct an interim reexamination. If so, the OHFA will conduct an interim in accordance with OHFA policies in Chapter 11. If not, OHFA will consider the amount when processing the family's next annual recertification.

Retirement Accounts [24 CFR 5.609(b)(26); Notice PIH 2023-27]

Income received from any account under a retirement plan recognized as such by the IRS, including individual retirement arrangements (IRAs), employer retirement plans, and retirement plans for self-employed individuals is not considered actual income from assets.

However, any distribution of periodic payments from such accounts is included in annual income at the time they are received by the family.

An asset moved to a retirement account held by a member of the family is not considered to be an asset disposed of for less than fair market value.

Social Security Benefits [Notice PIH 2018-24]

OHFA is required to use the gross benefit amount to calculate annual income from Social Security benefits.

Annually in October, the Social Security Administration (SSA) announces the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) by which federal Social Security and SSI benefits are adjusted to reflect the increase, if any, in the cost of living. The federal COLA does not apply to state-paid disability benefits. Effective the day after the SSA has announced the COLA, OHFA is required to factor in the COLA when determining Social Security and SSI annual income for all annual reexaminations and interim reexaminations of family income that have not yet been completed and will be effective January 1 or later of the upcoming year [Notice PIH 2023-27]. When a family member's benefits are garnished, levied, or withheld to pay restitution, child support, tax debt, student loan debt, or other debts, OHFA must use the gross amount of the income, prior to the reduction, to determine a family's annual income.

> Annual income includes "all amounts received," not the amount that a family may be legally entitled to receive but which they do not receive. When the SSA overpays an individual, resulting in a withholding or deduction from their benefit amount until the overpayment is paid in full, OHFA will use the reduced benefit amount after deducting only the amount of the overpayment withholding from the gross benefit amount.

Alimony and Child Support

The OHFA will count all regular payments of alimony or child support awarded as part of a divorce or separation agreement.

The OHFA will count court-awarded amounts for alimony and child support unless the family certifies and the OHFA verifies that the payments are not being made.

In order to verify that payments are not being made, the PHA will review child support payments over the last three months.

If payments are being made regularly, OHFA will use the amount received during the last 12 months (excluding any lump sums received). If payments have been made for a period less than 12 months, OHFA will average all payments that have been made.

At new admission or interim recertification, if any lump sum payments were made in the past 12 months, OHFA will determine the likelihood of the family receiving another similar payment within the next 12 months before deciding whether or not this amount will be included in the calculation of annual income.

If OHFA determines and can appropriately verify that the family in all likelihood will not receive a similar payment, then the amount will not be considered when projecting annual income.

If OHFA determines that it is likely that the family will receive a similar payment and can appropriately verify it, the amount will be included when projecting annual income.

If no payments have been made in the past three months and there are no lump sums, OHFA will not include alimony or child support in annual income.

6-I.I. NONRECURRING INCOME [24 CFR 5.609(b)(24) and Notice PIH 2023-27]

Income received as an independent contractor, day laborer, or seasonal worker is not excluded from income as nonrecurring income, even if the source, date, or amount of the income varies.

Income that has a discrete end date and will not be repeated beyond the coming year during the family's upcoming annual reexamination period will be excluded from a family's annual income as nonrecurring income. This exclusion does not include unemployment income and other types of periodic payments that are received at regular intervals (such as weekly, monthly, or yearly) for a period of greater than one year that can be extended.

Income amounts excluded under this category may include, but are not limited to:

- Nonrecurring payments made to the family or to a third party on behalf of the family to assist with utilities;
- Payments for eviction prevention;
- Security deposits to secure housing;
- Payments for participation in research studies (depending on the duration); and
- General one-time payments received by or on behalf of the family.

Nonrecurring income that is excluded under the regulations includes:

- Payments from the U.S. Census Bureau for employment (relating to decennial census or the American Community Survey) lasting no longer than 180 days and not culminating in permanent employment [24 CFR 5.609(b)(24)(i)].
- Direct federal or state payments intended for economic stimulus or recovery [24 CFR 5.609(b)(24)(ii)].
- Amounts directly received by the family as a result of state refundable tax credits or state or federal tax refunds at the time they are received [24 CFR 5.609(b)(24)(iii) and (iv)].
- Gifts for holidays, birthdays, or other significant life events or milestones (e.g., wedding gifts, baby showers, anniversaries) [24 CFR 5.609(b)(24)(v)].
- Non-monetary, in-kind donations, such as food, clothing, or toiletries, received from a food bank or similar organization [24 CFR 5.609(b)(24)(vi)]. When calculating annual income, PHAs are prohibited from assigning monetary value to such non-monetary in-kind donations received by the family [Notice PIH 2023-27]. Non-recurring, non-monetary in-kind donations from friends and family are excluded as non-recurring income. However, the value of regular in-kind donations (such as the value of groceries) received by friends and family are included.
- Lump-sum additions to net family assets, including but not limited to lottery or other contest winnings [24 CFR 5.609(b)(24)(vii)].

6-I.J. WELFARE ASSISTANCE

Overview

Welfare assistance is counted in annual income. Welfare assistance includes Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and any payments to individuals or families based on need that are made under programs funded separately or jointly by federal, state, or local governments.

Sanctions Resulting in the Reduction of Welfare Benefits [24 CFR 5.615]

OHFA must make a special calculation of annual income when the welfare agency imposes certain sanctions on certain families. The full text of the regulation at 24 CFR 5.615 is provided as Exhibit 6-3. The requirements are summarized below. This rule applies only if a family was receiving HCV assistance at the time the sanction was imposed.

Covered Families

The families covered by 24 CFR 5.615 are those "who receive welfare assistance or other public assistance benefits ('welfare benefits') from a State or other public agency ('welfare agency') under a program for which Federal, State or local law requires that a member of the family must participate in an economic self-sufficiency program as a condition for such assistance" [24 CFR 5.615(b)]

Imputed Income

When a welfare agency imposes a sanction that reduces a family's welfare income because the family commits fraud or fails to comply with the agency's economic self-sufficiency program or work activities requirement, OHFA must include in annual income "imputed" welfare income. OHFA must request that the welfare agency provide the reason for the reduction of benefits and the amount of the reduction of benefits. The imputed welfare income is the amount that the benefits were reduced as a result of the sanction.

This requirement does not apply to reductions in welfare benefits: (1) at the expiration of the lifetime or other time limit on the payment of welfare benefits, (2) if a family member is unable to find employment even though the family member has complied with the welfare agency economic self-sufficiency or work activities requirements, or (3) because a family member has not complied with other welfare agency requirements [24 CFR 5.615(b)(2)].

Offsets

The amount of the imputed welfare income is offset by the amount of additional income the family begins to receive after the sanction is imposed. When the additional income equals or exceeds the imputed welfare income, the imputed income is reduced to zero [24 CFR 5.615(c)(4)].

6-I.K. STATE PAYMENTS TO ALLOW INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES TO LIVE AT HOME [24 CFR 5.609(b)(19)]

Payments made by or authorized by a state Medicaid agency (including through a managed care entity) or other state or federal agency to an assisted family to enable a member of the assisted family who has a disability to reside in the family's assisted unit are excluded.

Authorized payments may include payments to a member of the assisted family through state Medicaid-managed care systems, other state agencies, federal agencies or other authorized entities.

The payments must be received for caregiving services a family member provides to enable another member of the assisted family who has a disability to reside in the family's assisted unit. Payments to a family member for caregiving services for someone who is not a member of the assisted family (such as for a relative that resides elsewhere) are not excluded from income.

Furthermore, if the agency is making payments for caregiving services to the family member for an assisted family member and for a person outside of the assisted family, only the payments attributable to the caregiving services for the caregiver's assisted family member would be excluded from income.

6-I.L. CIVIL RIGHTS SETTLEMENTS [24 CFR 5.609(b)(25); FR Notice 2/14/23]

Regardless of how the settlement or judgment is structured, civil rights settlements or judgments, including settlements or judgments for back pay, are excluded from annual income. This may include amounts received because of litigation or other actions, such as conciliation agreements, voluntary compliance agreements, consent orders, other forms of settlement agreements, or administrative or judicial orders under the Fair Housing Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504), the Americans with Disabilities Act, or any other civil rights or fair housing statute or requirement.

While these civil rights settlement or judgment amounts are excluded from income, the settlement or judgment amounts will generally be counted toward the family's net family assets (e.g., if the funds are deposited into the family's savings account or a revocable trust under the control of the family or some other asset that is not excluded from the definition of *net family assets*). Income generated on the settlement or judgment amount after it has become a net family asset is not excluded from income. For example, if the family received a settlement or back pay and deposited the money in an interest-bearing savings account, the interest from that account would be income at the time the interest is received.

Furthermore, if a civil rights settlement or judgment increases the family's net family assets such that they exceed $50,000 (as annually adjusted by an inflationary factor), then income will be imputed on the net family assets pursuant to 24 CFR 5.609(a)(2). If the imputed income, which HUD considers unearned income, increases the family's annual adjusted income by 10 percent or more, then an interim reexamination of income will be required unless the addition to the family's net family assets occurs within the last three months of the family's income certification period and the PHA or owner chooses not to conduct the examination.

6-I.M. ADDITIONAL EXCLUSIONS FROM ANNUAL INCOME [24 CFR 5.609(b); FR Notice 1/31/2024]

Other exclusions contained in 24 CFR 5.609(b) and FR Notice 1/31/24 that have not been discussed earlier in this chapter include the following:

- Payments received for the care of foster children or foster adults or state or tribal kinship or guardianship care payments [24 CFR 5.609(b)(4)].
- Insurance payments and settlements for personal or property losses, including but not limited to payments through health insurance, motor vehicle insurance, and workers' compensation [24 CFR 5.609(b)(5)]. However, periodic payments paid at regular intervals (such as weekly, monthly, or yearly) for a period of greater than one year that are received in lieu of wages are included in annual income [Notice PIH 2023-27].
- Amounts received by the family that are specifically for, or in reimbursement of, the cost of health and medical care expenses for any family member [24 CFR 5.609(b)(6)].
- Any amounts recovered in any civil action or settlement based on a claim of malpractice, negligence, or other breach of duty owed to a family member arising out of law, that resulted in a member of the family becoming disabled [24 CFR 5.609(b)(7)].
- Income and distributions from any Coverdell education savings account under Section 530 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or any qualified tuition program under Section 529 of such Code [24 CFR 5.609(b)(10)].
- Income earned by government contributions to, and distributions from, "baby bond" accounts created, authorized, or funded by federal, state, or local government [24 CFR 5.609(b)(10)].
- The special pay to a family member serving in the Armed Forces who is exposed to hostile fire [24 CFR 5.609(b)(11)].
- Payments related to aid and attendance under 38 U.S.C. 1521 to veterans in need of regular aid and attendance [24 CFR 5.609(b)(17)]. This income exclusion applies only to veterans in need of regular aid and attendance and not to other beneficiaries of the payments, such as a surviving spouse [Notice PIH 2023-27].
- Loan proceeds (the net amount disbursed by a lender to or on behalf of a borrower, under the terms of a loan agreement) received by the family or a third party (e.g., proceeds received by the family from a private loan to enable attendance at an educational institution or to finance the purchase of a car) [24 CFR 5.609(b)(20)]. The loan borrower or co-borrower must be a member of the family for this income exclusion to be applicable [Notice PIH 2023-27].

- Payments received by tribal members as a result of claims relating to the mismanagement of assets held in trust by the United States, to the extent such payments are also excluded from gross income under the Internal Revenue Code or other federal law [24 CFR 5.609(b)(21)]. Generally, payments received by tribal members in excess of the first $2,000 of per capita shares are included in a family's annual income for purposes of determining eligibility. However, as explained in Notice PIH 2023-27, payments made under the Cobell Settlement, and certain per capita payments under the recent Tribal Trust Settlements, must be excluded from annual income.
- Replacement housing "gap" payments made in accordance with 49 CFR Part 24 that offset increased out of pocket costs of displaced persons that move from one federally subsidized housing unit to another federally subsidized housing unit. Such replacement housing "gap" payments are not excluded from annual income if the increased cost of rent and utilities is subsequently reduced or eliminated, and the displaced person retains or continues to receive the replacement housing "gap" payments [24 CFR 5.609(b)(23)].
- Income earned on amounts placed in a family's Family Self-Sufficiency account [24 CFR 5.609(b)(27)].
- Amounts received by participants in other publicly assisted programs which are specifically for or in reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred e.g., special equipment, clothing, transportation, childcare, etc.) and which are made solely to allow participation in a specific program [24 CFR 5.609(i)(12)(ii)].
- Amounts received by a person with a disability that are disregarded for a limited time for purposes of Supplemental Security Income eligibility and benefits because they are set aside for use under a Plan to Attain Self-Sufficiency (PASS) [(24 CFR 5.609(b)(12)(i)].
- Amounts received under a resident service stipend not to exceed $200 per month. A resident service stipend is a modest amount received by a resident for performing a service for the PHA or owner, on a part-time basis, that enhances the quality of life in the development [24 CFR 5.609 I(12)(ii)].

Incremental earnings and benefits to any family member resulting from participation in qualifying training program funded by HUD or in qualifying federal, state, tribal, or local employment training programs (including training programs not affiliated with a local government) and training of a family member as resident management staff are excluded from annual income. Amounts excluded by this provision must be received under employment training programs with clearly defined goals and objectives and are excluded only for the period during which the family member participates in the training program unless those amounts are excluded under 24 CFR 5.609(b)(9)(i) [24 CFR 5.609(b)(12)(iv)].

> OHFA defines *training program* as "a learning process with goals and objectives, generally having a variety of components, and taking place in a series of sessions over a period of time. It is designed to lead to a higher level of proficiency, and it enhances the individual's ability to obtain employment. It may have performance standards to measure proficiency. Training may include but is not limited to: (1) classroom training in a specific occupational skill, (2) on-the-job training with wages subsidized by the program, or (3) basic education" [expired Notice PIH 98-2, p. 3].
>
> OHFA defines *incremental earnings and benefits* as the difference between (1) the total amount of welfare assistance and earnings of a family member prior to enrollment in a training program and (2) the total amount of welfare assistance and earnings of the family member after enrollment in the program [expired Notice PIH 98-2, pp. 3–4].
>
> In calculating the incremental difference, OHFA will use as the pre-enrollment income the total annualized amount of the family member's welfare assistance and earnings reported on the family's most recently completed HUD-50058.
>
> End of participation in a training program must be reported in accordance with OHFA's interim reporting requirements (see Chapter 11).

- Reparation payments paid by a foreign government pursuant to claims filed under the laws of that government by persons who were persecuted during the Nazi era [24 CFR 5.609(b)(13)].
- Adoption assistance payments for a child in excess of the amount of the dependent deduction per adopted child [24 CFR 5.609(b)(15)].
- Refunds or rebates on property taxes paid on the dwelling unit [24 CFR 5.609(b)(20)].
- Amounts that HUD is required by federal statute to exclude from consideration as income for purposes of determining eligibility or benefits under a category of assistance programs that includes assistance under any program to which the exclusions set forth in 24 CFR 5.609(b) apply. HUD will publish a notice in the *Federal Register* to identify the benefits that qualify for this exclusion. Updates will be published when necessary.

HUD publishes an updated list of these exclusions periodically. The most recent list of exclusions was published in the *Federal Register* on January 31, 2014. It includes:

(a) The value of the allotment provided to an eligible household under the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2017 (b)). This exclusion also applies to assets.

(b) Benefits under Section 1780 of the Richard B. Russell School Lunch Act and Child Nutrition Act of 1966, including WIC and reduced-price lunches.

(c) Payments, including for supportive services and reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses, to volunteers under the Domestic Volunteer Services Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 5044(g), 5058). The exclusion also applies to assets.

- Except, the exclusion does not apply when the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service determines that the value of all such payments, adjusted to reflect the number of hours such volunteers are serving, is equivalent to or greater than the minimum wage then in effect under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 201 et seq.) or the minimum wage, under the laws of the State where such volunteers are serving, whichever is the greater (42 U.S.C. 5044(f)(1)).

(d) Certain payments received under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1626(c)).

(e) Income derived from certain submarginal land of the United States that is held in trust for certain Indian tribes (25 U.S.C. 5506).

(f) Payments or allowances made under the Department of Health and Human Services' Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (42 U.S.C. 8624(f)(1)).

(g) Allowances, earnings, and payments to individuals participating in programs under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 which was reauthorized as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (29 U.S.C. 3241(a)(2)).

(h) Deferred disability benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, whether received as a lump sum or in monthly prospective amounts.

(i) Income derived from the disposition of funds to the Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians (Pub. L. 94-540, 90 Section 6).

(j) Payments, funds, or distributions authorized, established, or directed by the Seneca Nation Settlement Act of 1990 (25 U.S.C. 1774f(b)).

(k) A lump sum or periodic payment received by an individual Indian pursuant to the Class Action Settlement Agreement in the United States District Court case entitled *Elouise Cobell et al.* v. *Ken Salazar et al.,* for a period of one year from the time of receipt of that payment as provided in the Claims Resolution Act of 2010.

(l) The first $2,000 of per capita shares received from judgment funds awarded by the Indian Claims Commission or the U. S. Claims Court, the interests of individual Indians in trust or restricted lands, including the first $2,000 per year of income received by individual Indians from funds derived from interests held in such trust or restricted lands

(25 U.S.C. 1407-1408). This exclusion does not include proceeds of gaming operations regulated by the Commission (25 U.S.C. 1407–1408).

(m) Payments received from programs funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056(f)).

(n) Payments received on or after January 1, 1989, from the Agent Orange Settlement Fund or any other fund established pursuant to the settlement in *In Re Agent Orange* product liability litigation, M.D.L. No. 381 (E.D.N.Y.). This exclusion also applies to assets.

(o) Payments received under 38 U.S.C. 1833(c) to children of Vietnam veterans born with spinal bifida, children of women Vietnam veterans born with certain birth defects, and children of certain Korean and Thailand service veterans born with spinal bifida (42 U.S.C. 12637(d)).

(p) Payments received under the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 (25 U.S.C. 1721). This exclusion also applies to assets.

(q) The value of any childcare provided or arranged (or any amount received as payment for such care or reimbursement for costs incurred for such care) under the Childcare and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858q).

(r) Earned income tax credit (EITC) refund payments received on or after January 1, 1991 (26 U.S.C. 32(j)). This exclusion also applies to assets.

(s) Payments by the Indian Claims Commission to the Confederated Tribes and Bands of Yakima Indian Nation or the Apache Tribe of Mescalero Reservation (Pub. L. 95-433) This exclusion also applies to assets.

(t) Amounts of student financial assistance funded under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965j, including awards under federal work-study programs or under the Bureau of Indian Affairs student assistance programs (20 U.S.C. 1087uu). For Section 8 programs, only, any financial assistance in excess of amounts received by an individual for tuition and any other required fees and charges under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.), from private sources, or an institution of higher education (as defined under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)), shall be considered income if the individual is over the age of 23 with dependent children (Pub. L. 109–115, section 327 (as amended)).

(u) Allowances, earnings, and payments to AmeriCorps participants under the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12637(d)).

(v) Any amount of crime victim compensation that provides medical or other assistance (or payment or reimbursement of the cost of such assistance) under the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 received through a crime victim assistance program, unless the total amount of assistance that the applicant receives from all such programs is sufficient to fully compensate the applicant for losses suffered as a result of the crime (34 U.S.C. 20102(c)).

(w) Any amounts in an "individual development account" are excluded from assets and any assistance, benefit, or amounts earned by or provided to the individual development account are excluded from income, as provided by the Assets for Independence Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 604(h)(4)).

(x) Major disaster and emergency assistance received under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act and comparable disaster assistance provided by states, local governments, and disaster assistance organizations. This exclusion also applies to assets.

(y) Distributions from an ABLE account, distributions from and certain contributions to an ABLE account established under the ABLE Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113–295.), as described in Notice PIH 2019–09 or subsequent or superseding notice is excluded from income and assets.

(z) The amount of any refund (or advance payment with respect to a refundable credit) issued under the Internal Revenue Code is excluded from income and assets for a period of 12 months from receipt (26 U.S.C. 6409).

(aa) Assistance received by a household under the Emergency Rental Assistance Program pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Pub. L. 116–260, section 501(j)), and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

(ab) Per capita payments made from the proceeds of Indian Tribal Trust Settlements listed in IRS Notice 2013-1 and 2013-55 must be excluded from annual income unless the per capita payments exceed the amount of the original Tribal Trust Settlement proceeds and are made from a Tribe's private bank account in which the Tribe has deposited the settlement proceeds. Such amounts received in excess of the Tribal Trust Settlement are included in the gross income of the members of the Tribe receiving the per capita payments as described in IRS Notice 2013-1. The first $2,000 of per capita payments are also excluded from assets unless the per capita payments exceed the amount of the original Tribal Trust Settlement proceeds and are made from a Tribe's private bank account in which the Tribe has deposited the settlement proceeds (25 U.S.C. 117b(a), 25 U.S.C. 1407).

(ac) Any amounts (i) not actually received by the family, (ii) that would be eligible for exclusion under 42 U.S.C. 1382b(a)(7), and (iii) received for service-connected disability under 38 U.S.C. Chapter 11 or dependency and indemnity compensation under 38 U.S.C. Chapter 13 (25 U.S.C. 4103(9)(C)) as provided by an amendment by the Indian Veterans Housing Opportunity Act of 2010 (Pub. L. 111–269 section 2) to the definition of income applicable to programs under the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) (25 U.S.C. 4101 et seq.).

PART II: ASSETS

6-II.A. OVERVIEW

Annual income includes all actual anticipated income from assets (unless otherwise excluded by the regulations) even if the asset itself is excluded from net family assets [Notice PIH 2023-27].

The regulation at 24 CFR 5.603(b)(3) provides a list of items that are excluded from the calculation of net family assets. Note, unlike previous versions of the regulations, the current regulations do not list types of assets that are included in annual income. Instead, HUD relies on the definition of items excluded from assets to provide the scope of what is included. Exhibit 6-2 provides the regulatory definition of *net family assets*.

Optional policies for family self-certification of assets are found in Chapter 7. Policies related to the asset limitation may be found in Chapter 3.

Income from assets is always anticipated, irrespective of the income examination type.

> OHFA generally will use current circumstances to determine both the value of an asset and the anticipated income from the asset. OHFA will use other than current circumstances to anticipate income when (1) an imminent change in circumstances is expected, (2) it is not feasible to anticipate a level of income over 12 months, or (3) OHFA believes that past income is the best indicator of anticipated income. For example, if a family member owns real property that typically receives rental income, but the property is currently vacant, OHFA can take into consideration past rental income along with the prospects of obtaining a new tenant.
>
> Anytime current circumstances are not used to determine asset income, a clear rationale for the decision will be documented in the file. In such cases the family may present information and documentation to OHFA to show why the asset income determination does not represent the family's anticipated asset income.

6-II.B. ASSETS DISPOSED OF FOR LESS THAN FAIR MARKET VALUE [24 CFR 5.603(b)(2)]

OHFA must include the value of any business or family assets disposed of by an applicant or participant for less than fair market value (including a disposition in trust, but not in a foreclosure or bankruptcy sale) during the two years preceding the date of application or reexamination, as applicable, in excess of the consideration received for the asset. An asset moved to a retirement account held by a member of the family is not considered to be an asset disposed of for less than fair market value. [Notice PIH 2023-27].

Minimum Threshold

The *HCV Guidebook* permits the PHA to set a threshold below which assets disposed of for less than fair market value will not be counted [HCV GB, p. 5-27].

> OHFA will not include the value of assets disposed of for less than fair market value unless the cumulative fair market value of all assets disposed of during the past two years exceeds the gross amount received for the assets by more than $1,000.

Separation or Divorce

The regulation also specifies that assets are not considered disposed of for less than fair market value if they are disposed of as part of a separation or divorce settlement and the applicant or tenant receives important consideration not measurable in dollar terms.

> All assets disposed of as part of a separation or divorce settlement will be considered assets for which important consideration not measurable in monetary terms has been received. In order to qualify for this exemption, a family member must be subject to a formal separation or divorce settlement agreement established through arbitration, mediation, or court order.

Foreclosure or Bankruptcy

Assets are not considered disposed of for less than fair market value when the disposition is the result of a foreclosure or bankruptcy sale. Negative equity in real property or other investments does not prohibit the owner from selling the property or other investments, so negative equity alone would not justify excluding the property or other investments from family assets.

Family Declaration

Families must sign a declaration form at initial certification and each annual recertification identifying all assets that have been disposed of for less than fair market value or declaring that no assets have been disposed of for less than fair market value. OHFA may verify the value of the assets disposed of if other information available to the OHFA does not appear to agree with the information reported by the family.

6-II.C. ASSET INCLUSIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

Necessary and Non-Necessary Personal Property [24 CFR 5.603(b)(3)(i)]

All assets are categorized as either *real property* (e.g., land, a home) or *personal property*.

Personal property includes tangible items, like boats, as well as intangible items, like bank accounts.

The value of necessary items of personal property is excluded from the calculation of net family assets. Necessary items of personal property include a car used for commuting or medical devices.

HUD defines *necessary personal property* as items essential to the family for the maintenance, use, and occupancy of the premises as a home; or they are necessary for employment, education, or health and wellness. Necessary personal property includes more than merely items that are indispensable to the bare existence of the family. It may include personal effects (such as items that are ordinarily worn or utilized by the individual), items that are convenient or useful to a reasonable existence, and items that support and facilitate daily life within the family's home. Necessary personal property also includes items that assist a household member with a disability, including any items related to disability-related needs, or that may be required for a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability. Necessary personal property does not include bank accounts, other financial investments, or luxury items. Items of personal property that do not qualify as necessary personal property are classified as non-necessary personal property.

The combined value of all **non-necessary** items of personal property is only included in annual income when the combined total value exceeds $50,000 (adjusted annually by HUD). When the combined value of all non-necessary personal property does not exceed $50,000, as adjusted by inflation, all non-necessary personal property is excluded from net family assets.

While not an exhaustive list, the following table from Notice PIH 2023-27 provides examples of necessary and non-necessary personal property.

Necessary Personal Property	Non-Necessary Personal Property
Car(s)/vehicle(s) that a family relies on for transportation for personal or business use (e.g., bike, motorcycle, skateboard, scooter) Furniture, carpets, linens, kitchenware Common appliances Common electronics (e.g., radio, television, DVD player, gaming system) Clothing Personal effects that are not luxury items (e.g., toys, books) Wedding and engagement rings Jewelry used in religious/cultural celebrations and ceremonies Religious and cultural items Medical equipment and supplies Health care–related supplies Musical instruments used by the family Personal computers, phones, tablets, and related equipment Professional tools of trade of the family, for example professional books Educational materials and equipment used by the family, including equipment to accommodate persons with disabilities Equipment used for exercising (e.g., treadmill, stationary bike, kayak, paddleboard, ski equipment)	Recreational car/vehicle not needed for day-to-day transportation for personal or business use (campers, motorhomes, traveling trailers, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs)) Bank accounts or other financial investments (e.g., checking account, savings account, stocks/bonds) Recreational boat/watercraft Expensive jewelry without religious or cultural value, or which does not hold family significance Collectibles (e.g., coins/stamps) Equipment/machinery that is not used to generate income for a business Items such as gems/precious metals, antique cars, artwork, etc.

In determining the value of non-necessary personal property, OHFA will use the family's estimate of the value. OHFA may obtain an appraisal if there is reason to believe that the family's estimated value is off by $50 or more. The family must cooperate with the appraiser but cannot be charged any costs related to the appraisal.

Checking and Savings Accounts [Notice PIH 2023-27]

HUD considers bank accounts as non-necessary items of personal property. Whether or not non-necessary personal property is counted toward net family assets depends on the combined value of all of the family's assets.

- When the combined value of net family assets is greater than $50,000, as adjusted by inflation, checking and/or savings accounts would be counted toward net family assets.
- When the combined value of all non-necessary personal property does not exceed $50,000, as adjusted by inflation, all non-necessary personal property is excluded from net family assets. In this case, the value of the family's checking and/or savings accounts would not be considered when calculating net family assets.

However, actual income from checking and savings accounts is always included in a family's annual income, regardless of the total value of net family assets or whether the asset itself is included or excluded from net family assets, unless that income is specifically excluded.

ABLE Accounts [24 CFR 5.609(b)(10); Notice PIH 2019-09]

An Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) account is a type of tax-advantaged savings account that an eligible individual can use to pay for qualified disability expenses. Section 103 of the ABLE Act mandates that an individual's ABLE account (specifically, its account balance, contributions to the account, and distributions from the account) is excluded when determining the designated beneficiary's eligibility and continued occupancy under certain federal means-tested programs. The PHA must exclude the entire value of the individual's ABLE account from the household's assets. Distributions from the ABLE account are also not considered income. However, all wage income received, regardless of which account the money is paid to, is included as income.

Investment Accounts Such as Stocks, Bonds, Saving Certificates, and Money Market Funds [24 CFR 5.603(b)(1)]

HUD considers financial investments such as stocks and bonds non-necessary items of personal property. Whether non-necessary personal property is counted toward net family assets depends on the combined value of all of the family's assets.

- When the combined value of net family assets is greater than $50,000, as adjusted by inflation, financial investments such as stocks and bonds are considered part of net family assets. In this case, the value of the family's financial investments such as stocks and bonds would be counted toward net family assets.
- When the combined value of all non-necessary personal property does not exceed $50,000, as adjusted by inflation, all non-necessary personal property is excluded from net family assets. In this case, the value of the family's financial investments such as stocks and bonds would not be considered when calculating net family assets.

However, actual income from financial accounts is always included in a family's annual income, regardless of the total value of net family assets or whether the asset itself is included or excluded from net family assets, unless that income is specifically excluded. When a stock issues dividends in some years but not others (e.g., due to market performance), the dividend is counted as the actual return when it is issued, but when no dividend is issued, the actual return is $0. When the stock never issues dividends, the actual return is $0.

OHFA will include interest or dividends earned by investment accounts as actual income from assets even when the earnings are reinvested.

The cash value of such an asset is determined by deducting from the market value any broker fees, penalties for early withdrawal, or other costs of converting the asset to cash.

In determining the market value of an investment account, the PHA will use the value of the account on the most recent investment report.

Lump-Sum Additions to Net Family Assets [24 CFR 5.609(b)(24(viii); Notice PIH 2023-27]

The regulations exclude income from lump-sum additions to family assets, including lottery or other contest winnings as a type of nonrecurring income.

In addition, lump sums from insurance payments, settlements for personal or property losses, and recoveries from civil actions or settlements based on claims of malpractice, negligence, or other breach of duty owed to a family member arising out of law that resulted in a member of the family becoming a family member with a disability are excluded from income.

Further, deferred periodic amounts from Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security benefits that are received in a lump sum amount or in prospective monthly amounts, or any deferred Department of Veterans Affairs disability benefits that are received in a lump sum amount or in prospective monthly amounts are also excluded from income.

However, these amounts may count toward net family assets. OHFA must consider any actual or imputed returns from assets as income at the next applicable income examination. In the case where the lump sum addition to assets would lead to imputed income, which is unearned income, that increases the family's annual adjusted income by 10 percent or more, then the addition of the lump sum to the family's assets will trigger an immediate interim reexamination of income in accordance with Chapter 11. This reexamination of income must take place as soon as the lump sum is added to the family's net family assets unless the addition takes place in the last three months of family's income certification period and the PHA chooses not to conduct the examination.

For a discussion of lump-sum payments that represent the delayed start of a periodic payment, most of which are counted as income, see sections 6-I.H and 6-I.I.

> Any lump-sum receipts are only counted as assets if they are retained by a family in a form recognizable as an asset. [RHIIP FAQs]. For example, if the family receives a $1,000 lump sum for lottery winnings, and the family immediately spends the entire amount, the lump sum will not be counted toward net family assets.

Jointly Owned Assets [Notice PIH 2023-27]

For assets owned jointly by the family and one or more individuals outside of the assisted family, OHFA must include the total value of the asset in the calculation of net family assets, unless:

- The asset is otherwise excluded;
- The family can demonstrate that the asset is inaccessible to them; or
- The family cannot dispose of any portion of the asset without the consent of another owner who refuses to comply.

If the family demonstrates that they can only access a portion of an asset, then only that portion's value is included in the calculation of net family assets for the family.

Any income from a jointly owned asset must be included in annual income, unless:

- The income is specifically excluded;
- The family demonstrates that they do not have access to the income from that asset; or
- The family only has access to a portion of the income from that asset.

If the family demonstrates that they can only access a portion of the income from an asset, then only that portion's value is included in the calculation of income from assets.

If an individual is a beneficiary who is entitled to access the account's funds only upon the death of the account's owner, and may not otherwise withdraw funds from an account, then the account is not an asset to the assisted family, and the family should provide proper documentation demonstrating that they are only a beneficiary on the account.

Trusts [24 CFR 5.609(b)(2) and 5.603(b)(4)]

A *trust* is a legal arrangement generally regulated by state law in which one party (the creator or grantor) transfers property to a second party (the trustee) who holds the property for the benefit of one or more third parties (the beneficiaries).

The basis for determining how to treat trusts relies on information about who has access to either the principal in the account or the income from the account. There are two types of trusts, *revocable* and *irrevocable*.

When the creator sets up an *irrevocable trust*, the creator has no access to the funds in the account. Typically, special needs trusts are considered irrevocable. Irrevocable trusts not under the control of any member of the family are excluded from net family assets. The value of the trust continues to be excluded from net family assets, so long as the fund continues to be held in a trust that is not revocable by, or under the control of, any member of the family or household [24 CFR 5.603(b)(4)]. Further, where an irrevocable trust is excluded from net family assetsOHFA must not consider actual income earned by the trust (e.g., interest earned, rental income if property is held in the trust) for so long as the income from the trust is not distributed.

A *revocable trust* is a trust that the creator of the trust may amend or end (revoke). When there is a revocable trust, the creator has access to the funds in the trust account.

- A revocable trust that is under the control of the family is included in net family assets when the grantor is a member of the assisted family. If a revocable trust is included in the calculation of net family assets, then the actual income earned by the revocable trust is also included in the family's income. For example, interest earned or rental income if the property is held in the trust. OHFA must calculate imputed income on the revocable trust if net family assets are more than $50,000, as adjusted by inflation, and actual income from the trust cannot be calculated (e.g., if the trust is comprised of farmland that is not in use).
- A revocable trust that is not under the control of the family is excluded from net family assets. This happens when a member of the assisted family is the beneficiary of a revocable trust, but the grantor is not a member of the assisted family. In this case the beneficiary does not "own" the revocable trust, and the value of the trust is excluded from net family assets. For the revocable trust to be considered excluded from net family assets, no family or household member may be the account's trustee.

For both irrevocable and revocable trusts, if the value of the trust is not considered part of net family assets, then distributions from the trust are treated as follows:

- All distributions from the trust's principal are excluded from income.
- Distributions of income earned by the trust (i.e., interest, dividends, realized gains, or other earnings on the trust's principal), are included as income unless the distribution is used to pay for the health and medical expenses for a minor.

Life Insurance [FR Notice 2/14/23 and Notice PIH 2023-27]

Net family assets do not include the value of term life insurance, which has no cash value to the individual before death.

The cash value of a life insurance policy available to a family member before death, such as a whole life or universal life policy, is included in the calculation of the value of the family's assets. The cash value is the surrender value. While the cash value of an insurance policy is considered an asset, the face value of any policy is not. If such a policy earns dividends or interest that the family could elect to receive, the amount of dividends or interest is counted as income from the asset whether or not the family actually receives it.

Tax Refunds [24 CFR 5.603(b)(3)(xi) and Notice PIH 2023-27]

All amounts received by a family in the form of federal tax refunds or refundable tax credits are excluded from a family's net family assets for a period of 12 months after receipt by the family.

At the time of an annual or interim reexamination of income, if the federal tax refund was received during the 12 months preceding the effective date of the reexamination, then the amount of the refund that was received by the family is subtracted from the total value of net family assets. When the subtraction results in a negative number, then net family assets are considered $0.

Asset Exclusions [24 CFR 5.603(b)]

The following are excluded from the calculations of net family assets:

- The value of any account under a retirement plan recognized as such by the IRS, including individual retirement arrangements (IRAs), employer retirement plans, and retirement plans for self-employed individuals [24 CFR 5.603(b)(3)(iii)].
- The value of real property that the family does not have the effective legal authority to sell in the jurisdiction in which the property is located [24 CFR 5.603(b)(3)(iv)].
    - *Real property* as used in this part has the same meaning as that provided under the law of the state in which the property is located [24 CFR 5.100].
    - Examples of this include but are not limited to co-ownership situations (including situations where one owner is a victim of domestic violence), where one party cannot unilaterally sell the real property; property that is tied up in litigation; and inherited property in dispute [Notice PIH 2023-27].
- Any amounts recovered in any civil action or settlement based on a claim of malpractice, negligence, or other breach of duty owed to a family member arising out of law, that resulted in a family member being a person with a disability [24 CFR 5.603(b)(3)(v)];
- The value of any Coverdell education savings account under section 530 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 [24 CFR 5.603(b)(3)(vi)];

- The value of any qualified tuition program under Section 529 of such Code [24 CFR 5.603(b)(3)(vi)];
- The value of any "baby bond" account created, authorized, or funded by federal, state, or local government [24 CFR 5.603(b)(3)(vi)];
- Interests in Indian trust land [24 CFR 5.603(b)(3)(vii)];
- Equity in a manufactured home where the family receives assistance under 24 CFR part 982 [24 CFR 5.603(b)(3)(viii)];
- Equity in property under the Homeownership Option for which a family receives assistance under 24 CFR part 982 [24 CFR 5.603(b)(3)(ix)];
- Family Self-Sufficiency accounts [24 CFR 5.603(b)(3)(x)];
- Federal tax refunds or refundable tax credits for a period of 12 months after receipt by the family [24 CFR 5.603(b)(3)(xi)].
- The full amount of assets held in an irrevocable trust [Notice PIH 2023-27]; and
- The full amount of assets held in a revocable trust where a member of the family is the beneficiary, but the grantor/owner and trustee of the trust is not a member of the participant family or household [Notice PIH 2023-27].

6-II.D. DETERMINING INCOME FROM ASSETS

In some cases, amounts that are excluded from net family assets may be included as annual income when disbursements are made to a family from an asset. In other cases, amounts are excluded from annual income as a lump-sum addition to net family assets, but those funds are then considered a net family asset if held in an account or other investment that is considered part of net family assets [Notice PIH 2023-27].

Net Family Assets

Net family assets are defined as the net cash value of all assets owned by the family, after deducting reasonable costs that would be incurred in disposing real property, savings, stocks, bonds, and other forms of capital investment.

> Reasonable costs that would be incurred when disposing of an asset include, but are not limited to, penalties for premature withdrawal, broker and legal fees, and settlement costs incurred in real estate transactions such as settlement costs and transfer taxes [New PH OCC GB, *Income Determinations,* p. 24].

The calculation of asset income sometimes requires OHFA to make a distinction between an asset's market value and its cash value.

- The market value of an asset is its worth in the market (e.g., the amount a buyer would pay for real estate or the total value of an investment account).
- The cash value of an asset is its market value less all reasonable amounts that would be incurred when converting the asset to cash.

The cash value of real property or other assets with negative equity would be considered $0 for the purposes of calculating net family assets. Negative equity in real property or other investments does not prohibit the family from selling the property or other investments, so negative equity alone would not justify excluding the property or other investments from family assets [Notice PIH 2023-27].

Actual Income from Assets

Income from assets must be included on the Form HUD-50058 regardless of the amount of income. Actual income from assets is always included in a family's annual income, regardless of the total value of net family assets or whether the asset itself is included or excluded from net family assets, unless that income is specifically excluded by 24 CFR 5.609(b).

Income or returns from assets are generally considered to be interest, dividend payments, and other actual income earned on the asset, and not the increase in market value of the asset. The increase in market value is relevant to the cash value of the asset for the purpose of determining total net family assets and imputing income.

OHFA may determine the net assets of a family based on a self-certification by the family that the net family assets do not exceed $50,000 (adjusted annually by HUD), without taking additional steps to verify the accuracy of the declaration [24 CFR 5.618(b)]. Policies related to verification of assets are found in Chapter 7 of this policy.

OHFA may not calculate or include any imputed income from assets when net family assets total $50,000 or less [24 CFR 5.609(b)(1)]. The actual income from assets must be included on the Form HUD-50058.

Imputed Income from Assets

When net family assets exceed $50,000 (adjusted annually by HUD), OHFA may not rely on self-certification. If actual returns can be calculated, the OHFA must include actual income from the asset on the Form HUD-50058 (for example, a savings account or CD where the rate of return is known). If actual returns cannot be calculated, OHFA must calculate imputed returns using the HUD-determined passbook rate (for example, real property or a non-necessary item of personal property such as a recreational boat). Imputed income is calculated by multiplying the net cash value of the asset, after deducting reasonable costs that would be incurred in disposing of the asset, by the HUD-published passbook rate. If OHFA can compute actual income from some but not all assets, OHFA must compute actual returns where possible and use the HUD-determined passbook rate for assets where actual income cannot be calculated [24 CFR 5.609(a)(2)].

An asset with an actual return of $0 (such as a non-interest-bearing checking account), is not the same as an asset for which an actual return cannot be computed (such as non-necessary personal property). If the asset is a financial asset and there is no income generated (for example, a bank account with a zero percent interest rate or a stock that does not issue cash dividends), then the asset generates zero actual asset income, and imputed income is not calculated. When a stock issues dividends in some years but not others (e.g., due to market performance), the dividend is counted as the actual return when it is issued, and when no dividend is issued, the actual return is $0. When the stock never issues dividends, the actual return is consistently $0.

PART III: ADJUSTED INCOME

6-III.A. INTRODUCTION

Overview

HUD regulations require OHFA to deduct from annual income any of five mandatory deductions for which a family qualifies and allow the OHFA to deduct other permissive deductions in accordance with OHFA policy. The resulting amount is the family's adjusted income. Mandatory deductions are found in 24 CFR 5.611.

> 5.611 *Adjusted income* means annual income (as determined under § 5.609) of the members of the family residing or intending to reside in the dwelling unit, after making the following deductions:
>
> (a) *Mandatory deductions*
>
> (1) $480 for each dependent (adjusted annually by HUD, rounded to the next lowest multiple of $25);
>
> (2) $480 for any elderly family or disabled family (adjusted annually by HUD, rounded to the next lowest multiple of $25);
>
> (3) The sum of the following, to the extent the sum exceeds ten percent of annual income:
>
> (i) Unreimbursed health and medical care expenses of any elderly family or disabled family;
>
> (ii) Unreimbursed reasonable attendant care and auxiliary apparatus expenses for each member of the family who is a person with disabilities, to the extent necessary to enable any member of the family (including the member who is a person with disabilities) to be employed; and
>
> (4) Any reasonable childcare expenses necessary to enable a member of the family to be employed or to further his or her education.

This part covers policies related to these mandatory deductions. Verification requirements related to these deductions are found in Chapter 7.

Anticipating Expenses

Generally, the OHFA will use current circumstances to anticipate expenses. When possible, for costs that are expected to fluctuate during the year (e.g., childcare during school and non-school periods and cyclical medical expenses), the OHFA will estimate costs based on historic data and known future costs.

If a family has an accumulated debt for medical or disability assistance expenses, the OFHA will include as an eligible expense the portion of the debt that the family expects to pay during the period for which the income determination is being made. However, amounts previously deducted will not be allowed even if the amounts were not paid as expected in a preceding period. The OHFA may require the family to provide documentation of payments made in the preceding year.

When calculating health and medical care expenses, OHFA will include those expenses anticipated to be incurred during the 12 months following the certification date which are not covered by an outside source, such as insurance. The allowance is not intended to give a family an allowance equal to last year's expenses, but to anticipate regular ongoing and anticipated expenses during the coming year. Since these expenses are anticipated, the *PH Occupancy Guidebook* states "it is likely that actual expenses will not match what was anticipated. Typically, this would not be considered an underpayment as long as at the time of the annual reexamination, the expenses were calculated based on the appropriate verification" [New PH OCC GB, *Income Determinations,* p. 30]. For annual reexaminations, OHFA will use information for the previous 12-month period.

6-III.B. DEPENDENT DEDUCTION

An allowance of $480 is deducted from annual income for each dependent (which amount will be adjusted by HUD annually in accordance with the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, rounded to the next lowest multiple of $25) [24 CFR 5.611(a)(1)]. *Dependent* is defined as any family member other than the head, spouse, or cohead who is under the age of 18 or who is 18 or older and is a person with disabilities or a full-time student. Foster children, foster adults, and live-in aides are never considered dependents [24 CFR 5.603(b)].

6-III.C. ELDERLY OR DISABLED FAMILY DEDUCTION

A single deduction of $480 is taken for any elderly or disabled family (which amount will be adjusted by HUD annually in accordance with the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, rounded to the next lowest multiple of $25) [24 CFR 5.611(a)(2)].

An *elderly family* is a family whose head, spouse, cohead, or sole member is 62 years of age or older, and a *disabled family* is a family whose head, spouse, cohead, or sole member is a person with disabilities [24 CFR 5.403].

6-III.D. HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE EXPENSES DEDUCTION [24 CFR 5.611(a)(3)(i) and 5.603(b)]

Unreimbursed health and medical care expenses may be deducted to the extent that, in combination with any disability assistance expenses, they exceed ten percent of annual income.

This deduction is permitted only for families in which the head, spouse, or cohead is at least 62 or is a person with disabilities. If a family is eligible for a health and medical care expense deduction, the unreimbursed health and medical care expenses of all family members are included. The PHA calculates health and medical care expenses based on the family's past expenses, but accounting for any anticipated changes in expenses during the certification period.

Definition of *Medical Expenses*

HUD regulations define *health and medical care expenses* at 24 CFR 5.603(b) to mean "any costs incurred in the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease or payments for treatments affecting any structure or function of the body. Health and medical care expenses include medical insurance premiums and long-term care premiums that are paid or anticipated during the period for which annual income is computed."

Health and medical care expenses may be deducted from annual income only if they are eligible under this definition and not otherwise reimbursed.

Although HUD revised the definition of *health and medical care expenses* to reflect the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) general definition of medical expenses, HUD is not permitting PHAs to specifically align their policies to IRS Publication 502. PHAs must review each expense to determine whether it is eligible in accordance with HUD's definition.

While OHFA policies may not specifically align with IRS Publication 502, HUD recommends PHAs use it as a standard for determining allowable expenses, and the PHA may list examples of allowable expenses in their policy provided they comply with HUD's definition at 24 CFR 5.603. OHFA may not define *health and medical care expenses* more narrowly than the regulation.

> OHFA will use the most current IRS Publication 502 as a standard for determining if expenses claimed by eligible families qualify as health and medical care expenses. However, under no circumstances will the PHA deduct any expenses listed in IRS Publication 502 that do not conform with HUD's definition of *health and medical care expenses.*

Summary of Typical Allowable Health and Medical Care Expenses	
Services of medical professionals Surgery and medical procedures that are necessary, legal, and non-cosmetic Services of medical facilities Hospitalization, long-term care, and in-home nursing services Prescription medicines and insulin, but not nonprescription medicines even if recommended by a doctor Improvements to housing directly related to medical needs (e.g., ramps for a wheelchair, handrails) Medical insurance premiums or the cost of a health maintenance organization (HMO) Medicare Part B and Part D premiums	Substance abuse treatment programs Psychiatric treatment Ambulance services and some costs of transportation related to medical expenses. The PHA will use the most current medical mileage rate listed in IRS Publication 502. The cost and care of necessary equipment related to a medical condition (e.g., eyeglasses/lenses, hearing aids, crutches, and artificial teeth) The costs of buying, training, and maintaining a guide dog or other service animal to assist a visually impaired or hearing disabled person, or a person with other physical disabilities. In general, this includes any costs, such as food, grooming, and veterinary care, incurred in maintaining the health and vitality of the service animal so that it may perform its duties.
Note: This chart provides a summary of eligible health and medical care expenses only. In all cases, the PHA will consider whether health and medical expenses care expenses claimed by the family are eligible under HUD's definition.	

Families That Qualify for Both Health and Medical and Disability Assistance Expenses

This policy applies only to families in which the head, spouse, or cohead is 62 or older or is a person with disabilities.

When expenses anticipated by a family could be defined as either a health and medical care or disability assistance expenses, OHFA will consider them health and medical care expenses unless it is clear that the expenses are incurred exclusively to enable a person with disabilities to work.

6-III.E. DISABILITY ASSISTANCE EXPENSES DEDUCTION [24 CFR 5.603(b) and 24 CFR 5.611(a)(3)(ii)]

Unreimbursed reasonable expenses for attendant care and auxiliary apparatus for each member of the family who is a person with disabilities may be deducted if they: (1) are necessary to enable a family member 18 years or older to work, (2) are not paid to a family member or reimbursed by an outside source, (3) in combination with any medical expenses, exceed ten percent of annual income, and (4) do not exceed the earned income received by the family member who is enabled to work.

Earned Income Limit on the Disability Assistance Expense Deduction

A family can qualify for the disability assistance expense deduction only if at least one family member (who may be the person with disabilities) is enabled to work [24 CFR 5.603(b)].

The disability expense deduction is capped by the amount of "earned income received by family members who are 18 years of age or older and who are able to work" because of the expense [24 CFR 5.611(a)(3)(ii)]. The earned income used for this purpose is the amount verified before any earned income disallowances or income exclusions are applied.

The family must identify the family members enabled to work as a result of the disability assistance expenses. In evaluating the family's request, OHFA will consider factors such as how the work schedule of the relevant family members relates to the hours of care provided, the time required for transportation, the relationship of the family members to the person with disabilities, and any special needs of the person with disabilities that might determine which family members are enabled to work.

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

Eligible Auxiliary Apparatus [Notice PIH 2023-27]

Auxiliary apparatus items may include expenses for wheelchairs, ramps, adaptations to vehicles, guide dogs, assistance animals, or special equipment to enable a person who is blind or has low vision to read or type or special equipment to assist a person who is deaf or hard of hearing.

Eligible Attendant Care [Notice PIH 2023-27]

Examples of attendant care expenses can include teaching a person with disabilities how to perform day-to-day tasks independently like cleaning, bathing, doing laundry, and cooking. Attendant care can be 24-hour care, or care during sporadic periods throughout the day. The family determines the type of attendant care that is appropriate for the person with disabilities.

Attendant care expenses will be included for the period that the person enabled to work is employed plus reasonable transportation time. The cost of general housekeeping and personal services is not an eligible attendant care expense. However, if the person enabled to work is the person with disabilities, personal services necessary to enable the person with disabilities to work are eligible.

If the care attendant also provides other services to the family, OHFA will prorate the cost and allow only that portion of the expenses attributable to attendant care that enables a family member to work. For example, if the care provider also cares for a child who is not the person with disabilities, the cost of care must be prorated. Unless otherwise specified by the care provider, the calculation will be based upon the number of hours spent in each activity and/or the number of persons under care.

Payments to Family Members

No disability assistance expenses may be deducted for payments to a member of an assisted family [24 CFR 5.603(b)]. However, expenses paid to a relative who is not a member of the assisted family may be deducted if they are not reimbursed by an outside source.

Necessary and Reasonable Expenses

The family determines the type of care or auxiliary apparatus to be provided and must describe how the expenses enable a family member to work. The family must certify that the disability assistance expenses are necessary and are not paid or reimbursed by any other source.

OHFA determines the reasonableness of the expenses based on typical costs of care or apparatus in the locality. To establish typical costs, OHFA will collect information from organizations that provide services and support to persons with disabilities. A family may present, and OHFA will consider, the family's justification for costs that exceed typical costs in the area.

Families That Qualify for Both Health and Medical and Disability Assistance Expenses

This policy applies only to families in which the head or spouse is 62 or older or is a person with disabilities.

When expenses anticipated by a family could be defined as either health and medical care or disability assistance expenses, OHFA will consider them health and medical care expenses unless it is clear that the expenses are incurred exclusively to enable a person with disabilities to work.

6-III.F. CHILDCARE EXPENSE DEDUCTION

HUD defines *childcare expenses* at 24 CFR 5.603(b) as "amounts anticipated to be paid by the family for the care of children under 13 years of age (age 12 and younger) (including foster children) during the period for which annual income is computed, but only where such care is necessary to enable a family member to actively seek employment, be gainfully employed, or to further his or her education and only to the extent such amounts are not reimbursed. The amount deducted shall reflect reasonable charges for childcare. In the case of childcare necessary to permit employment, the amount deducted shall not exceed the amount of employment income that is included in annual income."

Clarifying the Meaning of *Child* for This Deduction

Childcare expenses do not include child support payments made to another on behalf of a minor who is not living in an assisted family's household [VG, p. 26]. However, childcare expenses for foster children that are living in the assisted family's household are included when determining the family's childcare expenses [HCV GB, p. 5-29].

Qualifying for the Deduction

Determining Who Is Enabled to Pursue an Eligible Activity

The family must identify the family member(s) enabled to pursue an eligible activity. The term *eligible activity* in this section means any of the activities that may make the family eligible for a childcare deduction (seeking work, pursuing an education, or being gainfully employed).

In evaluating the family's request, OHFA will consider factors such as how the schedule for the claimed activity relates to the hours of care provided, the time required for transportation, the relationship of the family member(s) to the child, and any special needs of the child that might help determine which family member is enabled to pursue an eligible activity.

Seeking Work

If the childcare expense being claimed is to enable a family member to seek employment, the family must provide evidence of the family member's efforts to obtain employment at each reexamination. The deduction may be reduced or denied if the family member's job search efforts are not commensurate with the childcare expense being allowed OHFA.

Furthering Education

If the childcare expense being claimed is to enable a family member to further their education, the member must be enrolled in school (academic or vocational) or participating in a formal training program. The family member is not required to be a full-time student, but the time spent in educational activities must be commensurate with the childcare claimed.

Being Gainfully Employed

If the childcare expense being claimed is to enable a family member to be gainfully employed, the family must provide evidence of the family member's employment during the time that childcare is being provided. Gainful employment is any legal work activity (full- or part-time) for which a family member is compensated.

Earned Income Limit on Childcare Expense Deduction

When a family member looks for work or furthers their education, there is no cap on the amount that may be deducted for childcare – although the care must still be necessary and reasonable. However, when childcare enables a family member to work, the deduction is capped by "the amount of employment income that is included in annual income" [24 CFR 5.603(b)].

The earned income used for this purpose is the amount of earned income verified after any earned income disallowances or income exclusions are applied.

OHFA must not limit the deduction to the least expensive type of childcare. If the care allows the family to pursue more than one eligible activity, including work, the cap is calculated in proportion to the amount of time spent working [HCV GB, p. 5-30].

When the childcare expense being claimed is to enable a family member to work, only one family member's income will be considered for a given period of time. When more than one family member works during a given period, OHFA generally will limit allowable childcare expenses to the earned income of the lowest-paid member. The family may provide information that supports a request to designate another family member as the person enabled to work.

Eligible Childcare Expenses

The type of care to be provided is determined by the assisted family. OHFA may not refuse to give a family the childcare expense deduction because there is an adult family member in the household that may be available to provide childcare [VG, p. 26].

Allowable Childcare Activities

For school-age children, costs attributable to public or private school activities during standard school hours are not considered. Expenses incurred for supervised activities after school or during school holidays (e.g., summer day camp, after-school sports league) are allowable forms of childcare.

The costs of general housekeeping and personal services are not eligible. Likewise, childcare expenses paid to a family member who lives in the family's unit are not eligible; however, payments for childcare to relatives who do not live in the unit are eligible.

If a childcare provider also renders other services to a family or childcare is used to enable a family member to conduct activities that are not eligible for consideration, OHFA will prorate the costs and allow only that portion of the expenses that is attributable to childcare for eligible activities. For example, if the care provider also cares for a child with disabilities who is 13 or older, the cost of care will be prorated. Unless otherwise specified by the childcare provider, the calculation will be based upon the number of hours spent in each activity and/or the number of persons under care.

Necessary and Reasonable Costs

Childcare expenses will be considered necessary if: (1) a family adequately explains how the care enables a family member to work, actively seek employment, or further their education, and (2) the family certifies, and the childcare provider verifies, that the expenses are not paid or reimbursed by any other source.

Childcare expenses will be considered for the time required for the eligible activity plus reasonable transportation time. For childcare that enables a family member to go to school, the time allowed may include not more than one study hour for each hour spent in class.

To establish the reasonableness of childcare costs, OHFA will use the schedule of childcare costs from a qualified local entity that either subsidizes childcare costs or licenses childcare providers. Families may present, and OHFAwill consider, justification for costs that exceed typical costs in the area.

6-III.G. HARDSHIP EXEMPTIONS [24 CFR 5.611(c), (d), and (e)]

Health and Medical Care and Disability Assistance Expenses [24 CFR 5.611(c); Notice PIH 2023-27]

The regulations provide for two types of hardship exemption categories for families that qualify for unreimbursed health and medical care expenses and/or disability assistance expenses. A family will benefit from this hardship exemption only if the family has eligible expenses that can be deducted in excess of five percent of annual income. In order to claim unreimbursed health and medical care expenses, the family must have a head, cohead, or spouse that is elderly or a person with a disability. In order to claim unreimbursed reasonable attendant care and auxiliary apparatus expenses, the family must include a person with a disability, and the expenses must enable any member of the family (including the member who is a person with a disability) to be employed.

Families may be eligible for relief under one of two categories; phased-in relief or general relief, as defined below.

Phased-In Relief

The first category is applicable to all families who received a deduction for unreimbursed health and medical care and/or reasonable attendant care or auxiliary apparatus expenses based on their most recent income review prior to January 1, 2024. The family must receive phased-in relief if they are determined to be eligible. These families will begin receiving a 24-month phased-in relief at their next annual or interim reexamination, whichever occurs first, after the date on which OHFA implements phased-in relief.

For these families, the threshold amount is phased-in as follows:

- The family is eligible for a deduction totaling the sum of expenses that exceeds 5 percent of annual income for the first 12 months.
- At the conclusion of 12 months, the family is eligible for a deduction totaling the sum of their expenses that exceed 7.5 percent of annual income for another 12 months.
- At the conclusion of 24 months, the standard threshold amount of 10 percent would be used, unless the family qualifies for relief under the general hardship relief category.
    - When an eligible family's phased-in relief begins at an interim reexamination, OHFA will need to process another transaction one year later to move the family along to the next phase. The transaction can be either an interim reexamination if triggered, or a non-interim reexamination transaction.

When an eligible family's phased-in relief begins at an interim reexamination, OHFA must process another transaction (either an interim reexamination or non-interim transaction, as applicable) one year later to move the family to the next phase.

Prior to the end of the 24-month period, the family may request a hardship exemption under the second category as described below. If the family is found eligible under the second category, the hardship exemption under the first category ends, and the family's hardship is administered in accordance with the requirements listed below. Once a family requests general relief the family may no longer receive phased-in relief. OHFA must track the 24-month phase-period for

each eligible family, even if a family's expenses go below the appropriate phase-in percentage, during the first or second 12-month phase-in period. The phase-in must continue for families who move to another housing unit at the same PHA. When the family is treated as a new admission under a different property/program (e.g., the family moves from public housing to the HCV program), unless OHFA has a written policy to continue the phased-in relief upon admission, the family's expense deduction will be calculated using the 10-percent threshold unless request for general relief is approved by OHFA. When a family moves with continued assistance or ports to a new PHA, the family must continue to receive the phased-in relief. The family must receive the remaining calendar months of the percentage phase-in. OHFA must use the existing phase-in documentation to determine the remaining calendar months and the percentage phase-in.

> OHFA will not continue the phased-in relief for families who move from public housing to HCV. These families will be treated as new admissions and the sum of expenses that exceeds 10 percent of annual income will be used to calculate their adjusted income.

General Relief

The second category is for families that can demonstrate:

- Their health and medical and/or disability assistance expenses increased (other than the transition to the higher threshold); or
- The family's financial hardship is a result of a change in circumstances (as defined in PHA policy) that would not otherwise trigger an interim reexamination.

The family may request a hardship exemption under the second category regardless of whether the family previously received the health and medical and/or disability assistance deductions or are currently or were previously receiving relief under the phased-in relief category above. HUD requires that OHFA develops policies defining what constitutes a hardship for purposes of this exemption.

OHFA must obtain third-party verification of the hardship or must document in the file the reason third-party verification was not available. OHFA must attempt to obtain third-party verification prior to the end of the 90-day hardship exemption period.

To qualify for a hardship exemption, a family must submit a request in writing. The request must show that the family's health and medical and/or disability assistance expenses have increased (other than the transition to the higher threshold) and that the family's financial hardship is a result of a change in circumstances. OHFA defines *a change in circumstances* as a decrease in income or increase in other expenses that has resulted in the family's financial hardship but does not, on its own, trigger an interim reexamination in accordance with OHFA policies.

Examples of circumstances constituting a financial hardship may include the following situations:

The family is awaiting an eligibility determination for a federal, state, or local assistance program, such as a determination for unemployment compensation or disability benefits;

The family's income decreased because of a loss of employment, death of a family member, or due to a natural or federal/state declared disaster; or

Other circumstances as determined by the OHFA.

The family must provide third-party verification of the hardship with the request. If third-party verification is not available, OHFA will document the file with the reason and will attempt to obtain third-party verification prior to the end of the 90-day hardship exemption period.

OHFA must promptly notify the family in writing of the change in the determination of adjusted income and the family's rent resulting from hardship exemptions. The notice must inform the family of when the hardship exemption will begin and expire [24 CFR 5.611(e)(2)].

OHFA will make a determination of whether the family qualifies within 30 calendar days and will notify the family in writing of the result within 14 business days of the determination.

If OHFA denies the hardship exemption request, OHFA notice will also state that if the family does not agree with OHFA determination, the family may request a hearing.

If the family qualifies for an exemption, OHFA will include the date the hardship exemption will begin and the date it will expire as well as information on how to request a 90-day extension based on family circumstances.

If the family qualifies, the family will receive a deduction for the sum of eligible expenses that exceed five percent of annual income.

The family's hardship relief ends when the circumstances that made the family eligible for the relief are no longer applicable or after 90 days, whichever is earlier. However, OHFA may, at its discretion, extend the relief for one or more additional 90-day periods while the family's hardship condition continues. OHFA is not limited to a maximum number of 90-day extensions.

OHFA must establish written policies regarding the types of circumstances that will allow a family to qualify for a financial hardship and when such deductions may be eligible for additional 90-day extensions. PHAs must develop policies requiring families to report if the circumstances that made the family eligible for the hardship exemption are no longer applicable.

The family may request an extension either orally or in writing prior to the end of the hardship exemption period. OHFA will extend relief for an additional 90-days if the family demonstrates to OHFA satisfaction that the family continues to qualify for the hardship exemption based on circumstances described above. OHFA will require updated verification based on the family's current circumstances. Additional extension(s) may be granted on a case-by-case basis provided the family continues to request extensions prior to the end of each hardship exemption period. Families must report if the circumstances that made the family eligible for the hardship exemption are no longer applicable. At any time, OHFA may terminate the hardship exemption if the OHFA determines that the family no longer qualifies for the exemption.

Childcare Expense Hardship Exemption [24 CFR 5.611(d) and Notice PIH 2023-27]

A family whose eligibility for the childcare expense deduction is ending may request a financial hardship exemption to continue receiving the deduction. If the family demonstrates to OHFA satisfaction that the family is unable to pay their rent because of the loss of the childcare expense deduction, and that the childcare expense is still necessary even though the family member is not working, looking for work, or seeking to further their education, OHFA must recalculate the family's adjusted income and continue the childcare deduction.

OHFA must develop a policy to define what constitutes a hardship, which includes the family's inability to pay rent. OHFA must obtain third-party verification of the hardship or must document in the file the reason third-party verification was not available. PHAs must attempt to obtain third-party verification prior to the end of the 90-day hardship exemption period.

For a family to qualify, they must demonstrate that their inability to pay rent would be as a result of the loss of this deduction. OHFA defines this hardship as a potential decrease in income or increase in other expenses that would result from the loss of the childcare expense and such loss would impact the family's ability to pay their rent.

Some factors to consider when determining if the family is unable to pay rent may include determining that the rent, utility payment, and applicable expenses (childcare expenses or health and medical expenses) are more than 40 percent of the family's adjusted income, or verifying whether the family has experienced unanticipated expenses, such as large medical bills, that have affected their ability to pay their rent.

The family must also demonstrate that the childcare expense is still necessary even though the family member is no longer employed or furthering their education. OHFA will consider qualification under this criterion on a case-by case basis (for example, if the

family member who was employed has left their job in order to provide uncompensated care to an elderly friend or family member who is severely ill and lives across town).

The family must provide third-party verification of the hardship with the request. If third-party verification is not available, OHFA will document the file with the reason and will attempt to obtain third-party verification prior to the end of the 90-day hardship exemption period.

OHFA must promptly notify the family in writing of the change in the determination of adjusted income and the family's rent resulting from hardship exemptions.

If OHFA denies the request, the notice must specifically state the reason for the denial. PHAs must provide families 30 days' notice of any increase in rent.

If OHFA approves the request, the notice must inform the family of when the hardship exemption will begin and expire [24 CFR 5.611(e)(2)]. The notice must also state the requirement for the family to report to OHFA if the circumstances that made the family eligible for relief are no longer applicable and that the family's adjusted income and tenant rent will be recalculated upon expiration of the hardship exemption [Notice PIH 2023-27].

OHFA will make a determination of whether the family qualifies within 30 calendar days and will notify the family in writing of the result within 14 business days of the determination.

If OHFA denies the hardship exemption request OHFA notice will also state that if the family does not agree with OHFA determination, the family may request an informal hearing.

If the family qualifies for an exemption, OHFA will include all required information listed above as well as information on how to request a 90-day extension based on family circumstances.

If the family qualifies, the hardship exemption and the resulting alternative adjusted income calculation must remain in place for a period of up to 90 days.

OHFA may, at its discretion, extend the hardship exemptions for additional 90-day periods based on family circumstances and as stated in OHFA policies. OHFA is not limited to a maximum number of 90-day extensions. OHFA must develop policies requiring families to report if the circumstances that made the family eligible for the hardship exemption are no longer applicable.

OHFA must promptly notify families in writing if they are denied either an initial hardship exemption or an additional 90-day extension of the exemption. If OHFA denies the request, the notice must specifically state the reason for the denial.

OHFA must notify the family if the hardship exemption is no longer necessary and the hardship exemption will be terminated because the circumstances that made the family eligible for the exemption are no longer applicable. The notice must state the termination date and provide 30 days' notice of rent increase, if applicable.

The family may request an extension either orally or in writing prior to the end of the hardship exemption period. OHFA will extend relief for an additional 90-days if the family demonstrates to OHFA's satisfaction that the family continues to qualify for the hardship exemption. OHFA will require updated verification based on the family's current circumstances. Additional extension may be granted on a case-by-case basis provided the family continues to request extensions prior to the end of each hardship exemption period. Families must report if the circumstances that made the family eligible for the hardship exemption are no longer applicable. At any time, OHFA may terminate the hardship exemption if OHFA determines that the family no longer qualifies for the exemption.

6-III.H. PERMISSIVE DEDUCTIONS [24 CFR 5.611(b)(1)(ii)]

OHFA may adopt additional permissive deductions from annual income if they establish a policy in the administrative plan. Permissive deductions are additional, optional deductions that may be applied to annual income. As with mandatory deductions, permissive deductions must be based on need or family circumstance and deductions must be designed to encourage self-sufficiency or other economic purpose. If OHFA offers permissive deductions, they must be granted to all families that qualify for them and should complement existing income exclusions and deductions [PH Occ GB, p. 128]. Permissive deductions may be used to incentivize or encourage self-sufficiency and economic mobility.

OHFA that adopts such deductions must have sufficient funding to cover the increased housing assistance payment cost of the deductions. OHFA will not be eligible for an increase in HCV renewal funding for subsidy costs resulting from such deductions.

OHFA has opted not to use permissive deductions.

PART IV: CALCULATING FAMILY SHARE AND PHA SUBSIDY

6-IV.A. OVERVIEW OF RENT AND SUBSIDY CALCULATIONS

TTP Formula [24 CFR 5.628]

HUD regulations specify the formula for calculating the total tenant payment (TTP) for an assisted family. TTP is the highest of the following amounts, rounded to the nearest dollar:

- 30 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income (adjusted income is defined in Part II)
- 10 percent of the family's monthly gross income (annual income, as defined in Part I, divided by 12)
- The welfare rent (in as-paid states only)
- A minimum rent between $0 and $50 that is established by the PHA

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

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

Welfare Rent [24 CFR 5.628]

PHA Policy

Welfare rent does not apply in this locality.

Minimum Rent [24 CFR 5.630]

PHA Policy

The minimum rent for this locality is $0.

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

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

PHA Subsidy [24 CFR 982.505(b)]

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

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

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

OHFA will make utility reimbursements to the family.

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

OHFA will issue all utility reimbursements monthly.

6-IV.B. FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS AFFECTING MINIMUM RENT [24 CFR 5.630]

The financial hardship rules described below do not apply in this jurisdiction because OHFA has established a minimum rent of $0.

Overview

If OHFA establishes a minimum rent greater than zero, OHFA must grant an exemption from the minimum rent if a family is unable to pay the minimum rent because of financial hardship.

The financial hardship exemption applies only to families required to pay the minimum rent. If a family's TTP is higher than the minimum rent, the family is not eligible for a hardship exemption. If OHFA determines that a hardship exists, the family share is the highest of the remaining components of the family's calculated TTP.

HUD-Defined Financial Hardship

Financial hardship includes the following situations:

(1) The family has lost eligibility for or is awaiting an eligibility determination for a federal, state, or local assistance program. This includes a family member who is a noncitizen lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act who would be entitled to public benefits but for Title IV of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996.

A hardship will be considered to exist only if the loss of eligibility has an impact on the family's ability to pay the minimum rent.

For a family waiting for a determination of eligibility, the hardship period will end as of the first of the month following: (1) implementation of assistance, if approved, or (2) the decision to deny assistance. A family whose request for assistance is denied may request a hardship exemption based upon one of the other allowable hardship circumstances.

(2) The family would be evicted because it is unable to pay the minimum rent.

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

(3) Family income has decreased because of changed family circumstances, including the loss of employment.

(4) A death has occurred in the family.

In order to qualify under this provision, a family must describe how the death has created a financial hardship (e.g., because of funeral-related expenses or the loss of the family member's income).

(5) The family has experienced other circumstances determined by OHFA.

OHFA has not established any additional hardship criteria.

Implementation of Hardship Exemption

Determination of Hardship

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

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

OHFA defines temporary hardship as a hardship expected to last 90 days or less. Long-term hardship is defined as a hardship expected to last more than 90 days.

When the minimum rent is suspended, the family share reverts to the highest of the remaining components of the calculated TTP. The example below demonstrates the effect of the minimum rent exemption.

Example: Impact of Minimum Rent Exemption Assume the PHA has established a minimum rent of $50.	
Family Share – No Hardship	**Family Share – With Hardship**
$0 30% of monthly adjusted income	$0 30% of monthly adjusted income
$15 10% of monthly gross income	$15 10% of monthly gross income
N/A Welfare rent	N/A Welfare rent
$50 Minimum rent	$50 Minimum rent
Minimum rent applies. TTP = $50	Hardship exemption granted. TTP = $15

To qualify for a hardship exemption, a family must submit a request for a hardship exemption in writing. The request must explain the nature of the hardship and how the hardship has affected the family's ability to pay the minimum rent.

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

No Financial Hardship

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

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

Temporary Hardship

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

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

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

Long-Term Hardship

If OHFA determines that the financial hardship is long-term, OHFA must exempt the family from the minimum rent requirement for so long as the hardship continues. The exemption will apply from the first of the month following the family's request until the end of the qualifying hardship. When the financial hardship has been determined to be long-term, the family is not required to repay the minimum rent.

The hardship period ends when any of the following circumstances apply:

(1) At an interim or annual reexamination, the family's calculated TTP is greater than the minimum rent.

(2) For hardship conditions based on loss of income, the hardship condition will continue to be recognized until new sources of income are received that are at least equal to the amount lost. For example, if a hardship is approved because a family no longer receives a $60/month child support payment, the hardship will continue to exist until the family receives at least $60/month in income from another source or once again begins to receive the child support.

(3) For hardship conditions based upon hardship-related expenses, the minimum rent exemption will continue to be recognized until the cumulative amount exempted is equal to the expense incurred.

6-IV.C. APPLYING PAYMENT STANDARDS [24 CFR 982.505; 982.503(b)]

Overview

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

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

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

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

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

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

Changes in Payment Standards

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

Decreases

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

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

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

If OHFA changes its payment standard schedule resulting in a lower payment standard amount, during the term of a HAP contract, tOHFA will not reduce the payment standard used to calculate subsidy for families under HAP contract as long as the HAP contract remains in effect.

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

Increases

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

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

Changes in Family Unit Size (Voucher Size)

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

Reasonable Accommodation

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

6-IV.D. APPLYING UTILITY ALLOWANCES [24 CFR 982.517]

Overview

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

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

Reasonable Accommodation and Individual Relief

On request from a family that includes a person with disabilities, OHFA must approve a utility allowance which is higher than the applicable amount on the utility allowance schedule if a higher utility allowance is needed as a reasonable accommodation to make the program accessible and usable by the family member with a disability [24 CFR 982.517(e)]. (See Chapter 2 for policies regarding the request and approval of reasonable accommodations.)

Further, OHFA may grant requests for individual relief from charges in excess of the utility allowance on reasonable grounds, such as special factors not within control of the resident, as the OHFA deems appropriate. The family must request the higher allowance and provide OHFA an explanation of the need for individual relief and an explanation about the amount of additional allowance required [see HCV GB, p. 18-8].

OHFA should develop criteria for granting individual relief, notify residents about the availability of individual relief, and notify participants about the availability of individual relief programs (sometimes referred to as "Medical Baseline discounts") offered by the local utility company.

The family must request the higher allowance and provide OHFA with information about the amount of additional allowance required.

OHFA will consider the following criteria as valid reasons for granting individual relief:

The family's consumption was mistakenly portrayed as excessive due to defects in the meter or errors in the meter reading.

The excessive consumption is caused by a characteristic of the unit or owner-supplied equipment that is beyond the family's control, such as a particularly inefficient refrigerator or inadequate insulation. The allowance should be adjusted to reflect the higher consumption needs associated with the unit until the situation is remedied. The resident should be granted individual relief until the allowance is adjusted.

The excessive consumption is due to special needs of the family that are beyond their control, such as the need for specialized equipment in the case of a family member who is ill, elderly, or who has a disability.

In determining the amount of the reasonable accommodation or individual relief OHFA will allow a reasonable measure of additional usage as necessary. To arrive at the amount of additional utility cost of specific equipment, the family may provide information from the manufacturer of the equipment, or the family or OHFA may conduct an internet search for an estimate of usage or additional monthly cost.

Information on reasonable accommodation and individual relief for charges in excess of the utility allowance will be provided to all families at admission as part of the information on payment standards and utility allowances in the briefing packet. OHFA will also provide information on utility relief programs or medical discounts (sometimes referred to as "Medical Baseline discounts") that may be available through local utility providers.

At its discretion, OHFA may reevaluate the need for the increased utility allowance at any regular reexamination.

If the excessive consumption is caused by a characteristic of the unit or OHFA-supplied equipment that is beyond the family's control, such as a particularly inefficient refrigerator or inadequate insulation, the individual relief to the resident will cease when the situation is remedied.

Utility Allowance Revisions

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

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

6-IV.E. PRORATED ASSISTANCE FOR MIXED FAMILIES [24 CFR 5.520]

HUD regulations prohibit assistance to ineligible family members. A *mixed family* is one that includes at least one U.S. citizen or eligible immigrant and any number of ineligible family members. OHFA must prorate the assistance provided to a mixed family. OHFA will first determine assistance as if all family members were eligible and then prorate the assistance based upon the percentage of family members that actually are eligible. For example, if OHFA subsidy for a family is calculated at $500 and two of four family members are ineligible, OHFA subsidy would be reduced to $250.

EXHIBIT 6-1: ANNUAL INCOME FULL DEFINITION

24 CFR 5.609

(a) Annual income includes, with respect to the family:

(1) All amounts, not specifically excluded in paragraph (b) of this section, received from all sources by each member of the family who is 18 years of age or older or is the head of household or spouse of the head of household, plus unearned income by or on behalf of each dependent who is under 18 years of age, and

(2) When the value of net family assets exceeds $50,000 (which amount HUD will adjust annually in accordance with the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers) and the actual returns from a given asset cannot be calculated, imputed returns on the asset based on the current passbook savings rate, as determined by HUD.

(b)Annual income does not include the following:

(1) Any imputed return on an asset when net family assets total $50,000 or less (which amount HUD will adjust annually in accordance with the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers) and no actual income from the net family assets can be determined.

(2) The following types of trust distributions:

(i) For an irrevocable trust or a revocable trust outside the control of the family or household excluded from the definition of net family assets under § 5.603(b):

(A) Distributions of the principal or corpus of the trust; and

(B) Distributions of income from the trust when the distributions are used to pay the costs of health and medical care expenses for a minor.

(ii) For a revocable trust under the control of the family or household, any distributions from the trust; except that any actual income earned by the trust, regardless of whether it is distributed, shall be considered income to the family at the time it is received by the trust.

(3) Earned income of children under the 18 years of age.

(4) Payments received for the care of foster children or foster adults, or State or Tribal kinship or guardianship care payments.

(5) Insurance payments and settlements for personal or property losses, including but not limited to payments through health insurance, motor vehicle insurance, and workers' compensation.

(6) Amounts received by the family that are specifically for, or in reimbursement of, the cost of health and medical care expenses for any family member.

(7) Any amounts recovered in any civil action or settlement based on a claim of malpractice, negligence, or other breach of duty owed to a family member arising out of law, that resulted in a member of the family becoming disabled.

(8) Income of a live-in aide, foster child, or foster adult as defined in §§ 5.403 and 5.603, respectively.

(9)

(i) Any assistance that section 479B of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 1087uu), requires be excluded from a family's income; and

(ii) Student financial assistance for tuition, books, and supplies (including supplies and equipment to support students with learning disabilities or other disabilities), room and board, and other fees required and charged to a student by an institution of higher education (as defined under Section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)) and, for a student who is not the head of household or spouse, the reasonable and actual costs of housing while attending the institution of higher education and not residing in an assisted unit.

(A) Student financial assistance, for purposes of this paragraph (9)(ii), means a grant or scholarship received from— (

1) The Federal government;

(2) A State, Tribe, or local government;

(3) A private foundation registered as a nonprofit under 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3);

(4) A business entity (such as corporation, general partnership, limited liability company, limited partnership, joint venture, business trust, public benefit corporation, or nonprofit entity); or

(5) An institution of higher education.

(B) Student financial assistance, for purposes of this paragraph (9)(ii), does not include—

(1) Any assistance that is excluded pursuant to paragraph (b)(9)(i) of this section;

(2) Financial support provided to the student in the form of a fee for services performed (e.g., a work study or teaching fellowship that is not excluded pursuant to paragraph (b)(9)(i) of this section); (

3) Gifts, including gifts from family or friends; or

(4) Any amount of the scholarship or grant that, either by itself or in combination with assistance excluded under this paragraph or paragraph (b)(9)(i), exceeds the actual covered costs of the student. The actual covered costs of the student are the actual costs of tuition, books and supplies (including supplies and equipment to support students with learning disabilities or other disabilities), room and board, or other fees required and charged to a student by the education institution, and, for a student who is not the head of household or spouse, the reasonable and actual costs of housing while attending the institution of higher education and not residing in an assisted unit. This calculation is described further in paragraph (b)(9)(ii)€ of this section.

(C) Student financial assistance, for purposes of this paragraph (b)(9)(ii) must be:

(1) Expressly for tuition, books, room and board, or other fees required and charged to a student by the education institution;

(2) Expressly to assist a student with the costs of higher education; or

(3) Expressly to assist a student who is not the head of household or spouse with the reasonable and actual costs of housing while attending the education institution and not residing in an assisted unit.

(D) Student financial assistance, for purposes of this paragraph (b)(9)(ii), may be paid directly to the student or to the educational institution on the student's behalf. Student financial assistance paid to the student must be verified by the responsible entity as student financial assistance consistent with this paragraph (b)(9)(ii).

(E) When the student is also receiving assistance excluded under paragraph (b)(9)(i) of this section, the amount of student financial assistance under this paragraph (b)(9)(ii) is determined as follows:

(1) If the amount of assistance excluded under paragraph (b)(9)(i) of this section is equal to or exceeds the actual covered costs under paragraph (b)(9)(ii)(B)(4) of this section, none of the assistance described in this paragraph (b)(9)(ii) of this section is considered student financial assistance excluded from income under this paragraph (b)(9)(ii)(E).

(2) If the amount of assistance excluded under paragraph (b)(9)(i) of this section is less than the actual covered costs under paragraph (b)(9)(ii)(B)(4) of this section, the amount of assistance described in paragraph (b)(9)(ii) of this section that is considered student financial assistance excluded under this paragraph is the lower of:

(i) the total amount of student financial assistance received under this paragraph (b)(9)(ii) of this section, or

(ii) the amount by which the actual covered costs under paragraph (b)(9)(ii)(B)(4) of this section exceeds the assistance excluded under paragraph (b)(9)(i) of this section.

(10) Income and distributions from any Coverdell education savings account under section 530 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or any qualified tuition program under section 529 of such Code; and income earned by government contributions to, and distributions from, "baby bond" accounts created, authorized, or funded by Federal, State, or local government.

(11) The special pay to a family member serving in the Armed Forces who is exposed to hostile fire.

(12)

(i) Amounts received by a person with a disability that are disregarded for a limited time for purposes of Supplemental Security Income eligibility and benefits because they are set aside for use under a Plan to Attain Self-Sufficiency (PASS);

(ii) Amounts received by a participant in other publicly assisted programs which are specifically for or in reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred (e.g., special equipment, clothing, transportation, childcare, etc.) and which are made solely to allow participation in a specific program;

(iii) Amounts received under a resident service stipend not to exceed $200 per month. A resident service stipend is a modest amount received by a resident for performing a service for the PHA or owner, on a part-time basis, that enhances the quality of life in the development.

(iv) Incremental earnings and benefits resulting to any family member from participation in training programs funded by HUD or in qualifying Federal, State, Tribal, or local employment training programs (including training programs not affiliated with a local government) and training of a family member as resident management staff. Amounts excluded by this provision must be received under employment training programs with clearly defined goals and objectives and are excluded only for the period during which the family member participates in the employment training program unless those amounts are excluded under paragraph (b)(9)(i) of this section.

(13) Reparation payments paid by a foreign government pursuant to claims filed under the laws of that government by persons who were persecuted during the Nazi era.

(14) Earned income of dependent fulltime students in excess of the amount of the deduction for a dependent in § 5.611.

(15) Adoption assistance payments for a child in excess of the amount of the deduction for a dependent in § 5.611.

(16) Deferred periodic amounts from Supplemental Security Income and Social Security benefits that are received in a lump sum amount or in prospective monthly amounts, or any deferred Department of Veterans Affairs disability benefits that are received in a lump sum amount or in prospective monthly amounts.

(17) Payments related to aid and attendance under 38 U.S.C. 1521 to veterans in need of regular aid and attendance.

(18) Amounts received by the family in the form of refunds or rebates under State or local law for property taxes paid on the dwelling unit.

(19) Payments made by or authorized by a State Medicaid agency (including through a managed care entity) or other State or Federal agency to a family to enable a family member who has a disability to reside in the family's assisted unit. Authorized payments may include payments to a member of the assisted family through the State Medicaid agency (including through a managed care entity) or other State or Federal agency for caregiving services the family member provides to enable a family member who has a disability to reside in the family's assisted unit.

(20) Loan proceeds (the net amount disbursed by a lender to or on behalf of a borrower, under the terms of a loan agreement) received by the family or a third party (e.g., proceeds received by the family from a private loan to enable attendance at an educational institution or to finance the purchase of a car).

(21) Payments received by Tribal members as a result of claims relating to the mismanagement of assets held in trust by the United States, to the extent such payments are also excluded from gross income under the Internal Revenue Code or other Federal law.

(22) Amounts that HUD is required by Federal statute to exclude from consideration as income for purposes of determining eligibility or benefits under a category of assistance programs that includes assistance under any program to which the exclusions set forth in paragraph (b) of this section apply. HUD will publish a notice in the Federal Register to identify the benefits that qualify for this exclusion. Updates will be published when necessary.

(23) Replacement housing "gap" payments made in accordance with 49 CFR part 24 that offset increased out of pocket costs of displaced persons that move from one federally subsidized housing unit to another Federally subsidized housing unit. Such replacement housing "gap" payments are not excluded from annual income if the increased cost of rent and utilities is subsequently reduced or eliminated, and the displaced person retains or continues to receive the replacement housing "gap" payments.

(24) Nonrecurring income, which is income that will not be repeated in the coming year based on information provided by the family. Income received as an independent contractor, day laborer, or seasonal worker is not excluded from income under this paragraph, even if the source, date, or amount of the income varies. Nonrecurring income includes:

(i) Payments from the U.S. Census Bureau for employment (relating to decennial census or the American Community Survey) lasting no longer than 180 days and not culminating in permanent employment.

(ii) Direct Federal or State payments intended for economic stimulus or recovery.

(iii) Amounts directly received by the family as a result of State refundable tax credits or State tax refunds at the time they are received.

(iv) Amounts directly received by the family as a result of Federal refundable tax credits and Federal tax refunds at the time they are received.

(v) Gifts for holidays, birthdays, or other significant life events or milestones (e.g., wedding gifts, baby showers, anniversaries).

(vi) Non-monetary, in-kind donations, such as food, clothing, or toiletries, received from a food bank or similar organization.

(vii) Lump-sum additions to net family assets, including but not limited to lottery or other contest winnings.

(25) Civil rights settlements or judgments, including settlements or judgments for back pay.

(26) Income received from any account under a retirement plan recognized as such by the Internal Revenue Service, including individual retirement arrangements (IRAs), employer retirement plans, and retirement plans for self-employed individuals; except that any distribution of periodic payments from such accounts shall be income at the time they are received by the family.

(27) Income earned on amounts placed in a family's Family Self Sufficiency Account.

(28) Gross income a family member receives through self-employment or operation of a business; except that the following shall be considered income to a family member:

(i) Net income from the operation of a business or profession. Expenditures for business expansion or amortization of capital indebtedness shall not be used as deductions in determining net income. An allowance for depreciation of assets used in a business or profession may be deducted, based on straight line depreciation, as provided in Internal Revenue Service regulations; and

(ii) Any withdrawal of cash or assets from the operation of a business or profession will be included in income, except to the extent the withdrawal is reimbursement of cash or assets invested in the operation by the family.

EXHIBIT 6-2: TREATMENT OF FAMILY ASSETS

24 CFR 5.603(b) Net Family Assets

(1) Net family assets is the net cash value of all assets owned by the family, after deducting reasonable costs that would be incurred in disposing real property, savings, stocks, bonds, and other forms of capital investment.

(2) In determining net family assets, PHAs or owners, as applicable, must include the value of any business or family assets disposed of by an applicant or tenant for less than fair market value (including a disposition in trust, but not in a foreclosure or bankruptcy sale) during the two years preceding the date of application for the program or reexamination, as applicable, in excess of the consideration received therefor. In the case of a disposition as part of a separation or divorce settlement, the disposition will not be considered to be for less than fair market value if the applicant or tenant receives consideration not measurable in dollar terms. Negative equity in real property or other investments does not prohibit the owner from selling the property or other investments, so negative equity alone would not justify excluding the property or other investments from family assets.

(3) Excluded from the calculation of net family assets are: (i) The value of necessary items of personal property; (ii) The combined value of all non necessary items of personal property if the combined total value does not exceed $50,000 (which amount will be adjusted by HUD in accordance with the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers); (iii) The value of any account under a retirement plan recognized as such by the Internal Revenue Service, including individual retirement arrangements (IRAs), employer retirement plans, and retirement plans for self-employed individuals; (iv) The value of real property that the family does not have the effective legal authority to sell in the jurisdiction in which the property is located; (v) Any amounts recovered in any civil action or settlement based on a claim of malpractice, negligence, or other breach of duty owed to a family member arising out of law, that resulted in a family member being a person with a disability; (vi) The value of any Coverdell education savings account under section 530 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, the value of any qualified tuition program under section 529 of such Code, the value of any Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) account authorized under Section 529A of such Code, and the value of any "baby bond" account created, authorized, or funded by Federal, State, or local government. (vii) Interests in Indian trust land; (viii) Equity in a manufactured home where the family receives assistance under 24 CFR part 982; (ix) Equity in property under the Homeownership Option for which a family receives assistance under 24 CFR part 982; (x) Family Self-Sufficiency Accounts; and (xi) Federal tax refunds or refundable tax credits for a period of 12 months after receipt by the family.

(4) In cases where a trust fund has been established and the trust is not revocable by, or under the control of, any member of the family or household, the trust fund is not a family asset and the value of the trust is not included in the calculation of net family assets, so long as the fund continues to be held in a trust that is not revocable by, or under the control of, any member of the family or household.

EXHIBIT 6-3: THE EFFECT OF WELFARE BENEFIT REDUCTION

24 CFR 5.615

Public housing program and Section 8 tenant-based assistance program: How welfare benefit reduction affects family income.

(a) *Applicability.* This section applies to covered families who reside in public housing (part 960 of this title) or receive Section 8 tenant-based assistance (part 982 of this title).

(b) *Definitions.* The following definitions apply for purposes of this section:

Covered families. Families who receive welfare assistance or other public assistance benefits ("welfare benefits") from a State or other public agency ("welfare agency") under a program for which Federal, State, or local law requires that a member of the family must participate in an economic self-sufficiency program as a condition for such assistance.

Economic self-sufficiency program. See definition at Sec. 5.603.

Imputed welfare income. The amount of annual income not actually received by a family, as a result of a specified welfare benefit reduction, that is nonetheless included in the family's annual income for purposes of determining rent.

Specified welfare benefit reduction.

(1) A reduction of welfare benefits by the welfare agency, in whole or in part, for a family member, as determined by the welfare agency, because of fraud by a family member in connection with the welfare program; or because of welfare agency sanction against a family member for noncompliance with a welfare agency requirement to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program.

(2) "Specified welfare benefit reduction" does not include a reduction or termination of welfare benefits by the welfare agency:

(i) at expiration of a lifetime or other time limit on the payment of welfare benefits;

(ii) because a family member is not able to obtain employment, even though the family member has complied with welfare agency economic self-sufficiency or work activities requirements; or

(iii) because a family member has not complied with other welfare agency requirements.

(c) *Imputed welfare income.*

(1) A family's annual income includes the amount of imputed welfare income (because of a specified welfare benefits reduction, as specified in notice to the PHA by the welfare agency), plus the total amount of other annual income as determined in accordance with Sec. 5.609.

(2) At the request of the PHA, the welfare agency will inform the PHA in writing of the amount and term of any specified welfare benefit reduction for a family member, and the reason for such reduction, and will also inform the PHA of any subsequent changes in the term or amount of such specified welfare benefit reduction. The PHA will use this information to determine the amount of imputed welfare income for a family.

(3) A family's annual income includes imputed welfare income in family annual income, as determined at the PHA's interim or regular reexamination of family income and composition, during the term of the welfare benefits reduction (as specified in information provided to the PHA by the welfare agency).

(4) The amount of the imputed welfare income is offset by the amount of additional income a family receives that commences after the time the sanction was imposed. When such additional income from other sources is at least equal to the imputed

(5) The PHA may not include imputed welfare income in annual income if the family was not an assisted resident at the time of sanction.

(d) *Review of PHA decision.*

(1) Public housing. If a public housing tenant claims that the PHA has not correctly calculated the amount of imputed welfare income in accordance with HUD requirements, and if the PHA denies the family's request to modify such amount, the PHA shall give the tenant written notice of such denial, with a brief explanation of the basis for the PHA determination of the amount of imputed welfare income. The PHA notice shall also state that if the tenant does not agree with the PHA determination, the tenant may request a grievance hearing in accordance with part 966, subpart B of this title to review the PHA determination. The tenant is not required to pay an escrow deposit pursuant to Sec. 966.55(e) for the portion of tenant rent attributable to the imputed welfare income in order to obtain a grievance hearing on the PHA determination.

(2) Section 8 participant. A participant in the Section 8 tenant-based assistance program may request an informal hearing, in accordance with Sec. 982.555 of this title, to review the PHA determination of the amount of imputed welfare income that must be included in the family's annual income in accordance with this section. If the family claims that such amount is not correctly calculated in accordance with HUD requirements, and if the PHA denies the family's request to modify such amount, the PHA shall give the family written notice of such denial, with a brief explanation of the basis for the PHA determination of the amount of imputed welfare income. Such notice shall also state that if the family does not agree with the PHA determination, the family may request an informal hearing on the determination under the PHA hearing procedure.

(e) *PHA relation with welfare agency.*

(1) The PHA must ask welfare agencies to inform the PHA of any specified welfare benefits reduction for a family member, the reason for such reduction, the term of any such reduction, and any subsequent welfare agency determination affecting the amount or term of a specified welfare benefits reduction. If the welfare agency determines a specified welfare benefits reduction for a family member, and gives the PHA written notice of such reduction, the family's annual incomes shall include the imputed welfare income because of the specified welfare benefits reduction.

(2) The PHA is responsible for determining the amount of imputed welfare income that is included in the family's annual income as a result of a specified welfare benefits reduction as determined by the welfare agency, and specified in the notice by the welfare agency to the PHA. However, the PHA is not responsible for determining whether a reduction of welfare benefits by the welfare agency was correctly determined by the welfare agency in accordance with welfare program requirements and procedures, nor for providing the opportunity for review or hearing on such welfare agency determinations.

(3) Such welfare agency determinations are the responsibility of the welfare agency, and the family may seek appeal of such determinations through the welfare agency's normal due process procedures. The PHA shall be entitled to rely on the welfare agency notice to the PHA of the welfare agency's determination of a specified welfare benefits reduction.

Chapter 7

VERIFICATION

[24 CFR 982.516, 24 CFR 982.551, 24 CFR 5.230, Notice PIH 2018-18]

INTRODUCTION

Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) must verify all information that is used to establish the family's eligibility and level of assistance and is required to obtain the family's consent to collect the information. Applicants and program participants must cooperate with the verification process as a condition of receiving assistance. OHFA must not pass on the cost of verification to the family.

OHFA will follow the verification guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in Notice PIH 2018-18 and any subsequent guidance issued by HUD. This chapter summarizes those requirements and provides supplementary OHFA policies.

Part I: General Verification Requirements

Part II: Verifying Family Information

Part III: Verifying Income and Assets

Part IV: Verifying Mandatory Deductions

Verification policies, rules and procedures will be modified as needed to accommodate persons with disabilities. All information obtained through the verification process will be handled in accordance with the records management policies of OHFA.

PART I: GENERAL VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

7-I.A. FAMILY CONSENT TO RELEASE OF INFORMATION [24 CFR 982.516 AND 982.551, 24 CFR 5.230]

The family must supply any information that OHFA or HUD determines is necessary to the administration of the program and must consent to OHFA verification of that information [24 CFR 982.551].

Consent Forms

It is required that all adult applicants and participants sign form HUD-9886, Authorization for Release of Information. The purpose of form HUD-9886 is to facilitate automated data collection and computer matching from specific sources and provides the family's consent only for the specific purposes listed on the form. HUD and OHFA may collect information from State Wage Information Collection Agencies (SWICAs) and current and former employers of adult family members. Only HUD is authorized to collect information directly from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA). Adult family members must sign other consent forms as needed to collect information relevant to the family's eligibility and level of assistance.

Penalties for Failing to Consent [24 CFR 5.232]

If any family member who is required to sign a consent form fails to do so, OHFA will deny admission to applicants and terminate assistance of participants. The family may request an informal review (applicants) or informal hearing (participants) in accordance with OHFA's procedures.

7-I.B. OVERVIEW OF VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

HUD's Verification Hierarchy [Notice PIH 2018-18]

HUD authorizes OHFA to use six methods to verify family information and specifies the circumstances in which each method will be used. In general, HUD requires OHFA to use the most reliable form of verification that is available and to document the reasons when OHFA uses a lesser form of verification.

In order of priority, the forms of verification that OHFA will use are:

- Up-front Income Verification (UIV) using HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system
- Up-front Income Verification (UIV) using a non-HUD system
- Written Third-Party Verification (may be provided by applicant or participant)

- Written Third-party Verification Form
- Oral Third-party Verification
- Tenant Declaration (Self-Certification)

Each of the verification methods is discussed in subsequent sections below.

Requirements for Acceptable Documents

Any documents used for verification must be the original (not photocopies) and generally must be dated within 60 days of OHFA's interview/determination or request date. The documents must not be damaged, altered or in any way illegible.

Printouts from Web pages may be considered original documents.

The OHFA staff member who views the original document must make a photocopy, if it is a driver's license or photo ID write the date of birth (DOB) on the copy and initial. If it is a Social Security (SS) card, write the SS number on the copy and initial.

Any family self-certifications must be made in a format acceptable to OHFA.

File Documentation

OHFA must document in the file how the figures used in income and rent calculations were determined. All verification attempts, information obtained, and decisions reached during the verification process will be recorded in the family's file in sufficient detail to demonstrate that OHFA has followed all of the verification policies set forth in this plan. The record should be sufficient to enable a staff member or HUD reviewer to understand the process followed and conclusions reached.

OHFA will document, in the family file, the following:

Reported family annual income

Value of assets

Expenses related to deductions from annual income

Other factors influencing the adjusted income or income-based rent determination

When OHFA is unable to obtain third-party verification, OHFA will document in the family file the reason that third-party verification was not available [24 CFR 960.259(c)(1); Notice PIH 2018-18].

7-I.C. UP-FRONT INCOME VERIFICATION (UIV)

Up-front income verification (UIV) refers to OHFA's use of the verification tools available from independent sources that maintain computerized information about earnings and benefits. UIV will be used to the extent that these systems are available to OHFA.

There may be legitimate differences between the information provided by the family and UIV-generated information. If the family disputes the accuracy of UIV data, no adverse action can be taken until OHFA has independently verified the UIV information and the family has been granted an opportunity to contest any adverse findings through the informal review/hearing process of OHFA.

See Chapter 6 for OHFA's policy on the use of UIV/EIV to project annual income.

Upfront Income Verification Using HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System (Mandatory)

HUD's EIV system contains data showing earned income, unemployment benefits, social security benefits, and SSI benefits for participant families. HUD requires OHFA to use the EIV system in its entirety. The following policies apply to the use of HUD's EIV system.

EIV Income and IVT Reports

The data shown on income and income validation tool (IVT) reports is updated quarterly. Data may be between three and six months old at the time reports are generated.

OHFA will obtain income reports for annual reexaminations on a monthly basis. Reports will be generated as part of the regular reexamination process.

Income and IVT reports will be compared to family-provided information as part of the annual reexamination process. Income reports may be used in the calculation of annual income, as described in Chapter 6-I.C. Income reports may also be used to meet the regulatory requirement for third party verification, as described above. Policies for resolving discrepancies between income reports and family-provided information will be resolved as described in Chapter 6-I.C. and in this chapter.

Income and IVT reports will be used in interim reexaminations to identify any discrepancies between reported income and income shown in the EIV system, and as necessary to verify earned income, and to verify and calculate unemployment benefits, Social Security and/or SSI benefits. EIV will also be used to verify that families claiming zero income are not receiving income from any of these sources.

Income and IVT reports will be retained in participant files with the applicable annual or interim reexamination documents.

When OHFA determines through EIV reports and third-party verification that a family has concealed or under-reported income, corrective action will be taken pursuant to the policies in Chapter 14, Program Integrity.

EIV Discrepancy Reports

The EIV discrepancy report is a tool for identifying families who may have concealed or under-reported income. Data in the discrepancy report represents income for past reporting periods and may be between 6 months and 30 months old at the time reports are generated.

Families who have not concealed or under-reported income may appear on the discrepancy report in some circumstances, such as loss of a job or addition of new family members.

Income discrepancies may be identified through use of the EIV "Income Discrepancy Report" or by review of the discrepancy tab for the individual family.

When OHFA determines that a participant appearing on the Income Discrepancy Report has not concealed or under-reported income, the participant's name will be placed on a list of "false positive" reviews. To avoid multiple reviews in this situation, participants appearing on this list will be eliminated from discrepancy processing until a subsequent interim or annual reexamination has been completed.

OHFA will review the EIV discrepancy tab during processing of annual and interim reexaminations.

When it appears that a family may have concealed or under-reported income, OHFA will request written third-party verification of the income in question.

When OHFA determines through file review and third-party verification that a family has concealed or under-reported income, corrective action will be taken pursuant to the policies in Chapter 14, Program Integrity.

EIV Identity Verification

The EIV system verifies tenant identities against SSA records. These records are compared to PIC data for a match on social security number, name, and date of birth.

OHFA is required to use EIV's *Identity Verification Report* on a monthly basis to improve the availability of income information in EIV [Notice PIH 2018-24].

When identity verification for a participant fails, a message will be displayed within the EIV system and no income information will be displayed.

OHFA will identify participants whose identity verification has failed by reviewing EIV's *Identity Verification Report* on a monthly basis.

OHFA will attempt to resolve PIC/SSA discrepancies by obtaining appropriate documentation from the participant. When OHFA determines that discrepancies exist due to OHFA errors such as spelling errors or incorrect birth dates, the errors will be corrected promptly.

Upfront Income Verification Using Non-HUD Systems (Optional)

In addition to mandatory use of the EIV system, HUD encourages PHAs to utilize other upfront verification sources.

OHFA will inform all applicants and participants of its use of the following UIV resources during the admission and reexamination process:

HUD's EIV system

Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) data

Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) data

7-I.D. THIRD-PARTY WRITTEN AND ORAL VERIFICATION

HUD's current verification hierarchy defines two types of written third-party verification. The more preferable form, "written third-party verification," consists of an original document generated by a third-party source, which may be received directly from a third-party source or provided to OHFA by the family. If written third-party verification is not available, OHFA must attempt to obtain a "written third-party verification form." This is a standardized form used to collect information from a third party.

Written Third-Party Verification [Notice PIH 2018-18]

Written third-party verification documents must be original and authentic and may be supplied by the family or received from a third-party source.

Examples of acceptable tenant-provided documents include, but are not limited to: pay stubs, payroll summary reports, employer notice, or letters of hire and termination, SSA benefit verification letters, bank statements, child support payment stubs, welfare benefit letters and/or printouts, and unemployment monetary benefit notices.

OHFA is required to obtain, at minimum, two current and consecutive pay stubs for determining annual income from wages.

OHFA may reject documentation provided by the family if the document is not an original, if the document appears to be forged, or if the document is altered, mutilated, or illegible.

Third-party documents provided by the family must be dated within 60 days of OHFA's request date or the interview date.

If OHFA determines that third-party documents provided by the family are not acceptable, OHFA will explain the reason to the family and request additional documentation.

As verification of earned income, OHFA will request two current consecutive pay stubs dated within the last 60 days prior to OHFA's request or the interview date. For new income sources or when two pay stubs are not available, OHFA will project income based on information from a traditional written third party verification form or the best available information.

Written Third-Party Verification Form

When upfront verification is not available and the family is unable to provide written third-party documents, OHFA must request a written third-party verification form. HUD's position is that this traditional third-party verification method presents administrative burdens and risks, which may be reduced through the use of family-provided third-party documents.

A written third-party verification form is mandatory when there is an unreported source of income or a substantial difference in reported income ($2400 annually or more) and there is no UIV or tenant-provided documentation to support the income discrepancy.

OHFA may mail, fax, or e-mail third-party written verification form requests to third-party sources.

OHFA will send third-party verification forms directly to the third party.

Third-party verification forms will be sent when third-party verification documents are unavailable or are rejected by OHFA.

Oral Third-Party Verification [Notice PIH 2018-18]

For third-party oral verification, PHAs contact sources, identified by UIV techniques or by the family, by telephone or in person.

Oral third-party verification is mandatory if neither form of written third-party verification is available.

Third-party oral verification may be used when requests for written third-party verification forms have not been returned within a reasonable time—e.g., 14 days.

OHFA should document in the file the date and time of the telephone call or visit, the name of the person contacted, the telephone number, as well as the information confirmed.

In collecting third-party oral verification, OHFA staff will record in the family's file the name and title of the person contacted, the date and time of the conversation (or attempt), the telephone number used, and the facts provided.

When any source responds verbally to the initial written request for verification OHFA will accept the verbal response as oral verification but will also request that the source complete and return any verification forms that were provided.

When Third-Party Verification is Not Required [Notice PIH 2018-18]

Third-party verification may not be available in all situations. HUD has acknowledged that it may not be cost-effective or reasonable to obtain third-party verification of income, assets, or expenses when these items would have a minimal impact on the family's total tenant payment.

If the family cannot provide original documents, OHFA will pay the service charge required to obtain third-party verification, unless it is not cost effective in which case a self-certification will be acceptable as the only means of verification. The cost of verification will not be passed on to the family.

The cost of postage and envelopes to obtain third-party verification of income, assets, and expenses is not an unreasonable cost [VG, p. 18].

Primary Documents

Third-party verification is not required when legal documents are the primary source, such as a birth certificate or other legal documentation of birth.

Imputed Assets

HUD permits OHFA to accept a self-certification from a family as verification of assets disposed of for less than fair market value [HCV GB, p. 5-28].

OHFA will accept a self-certification from a family as verification of assets disposed of for less than fair market value.

Value of Assets and Asset Income [24 CFR 982.516(a)]

For families with net assets totaling $5,000 or less, OHFA may accept the family's declaration of asset value and anticipated asset income. However, OHFA is required to obtain third-party verification of all assets regardless of the amount during the intake process and at least every three years thereafter.

For families with net assets totaling $5,000 or less, OHFA will accept the family's self-certification of the value of family assets and anticipated asset income when applicable. The family's declaration must show each asset and the amount of income expected from that asset. All family members 18 years of age and older must sign the family's declaration.

OHFA will use third-party documentation for assets as part of the intake process, whenever a family member is added to verify the individual's assets, and every three years thereafter.

7-I.E. SELF-CERTIFICATION

When HUD requires third-party verification, self-certification, or "tenant declaration," is used as a last resort when OHFA is unable to obtain third-party verification.

Self-certification, however, is an acceptable form of verification when:

- A source of income is fully excluded
- Net family assets total $5,000 or less and OHFA has adopted a policy to accept self-certification at annual recertification, when applicable

When OHFA was required to obtain third-party verification but instead relies on a tenant declaration for verification of income, assets, or expenses, the family's file must be documented to explain why third-party verification was not available.

When information cannot be verified by a third-party or by review of documents, family members will be required to submit self-certifications attesting to the accuracy of the information they have provided to OHFA.

OHFA may require a family to certify that a family member does not receive a particular type of income or benefit.

The self-certification must be made in a format acceptable to OHFA and must be signed by the family member whose information or status is being verified.

PART II: VERIFYING FAMILY INFORMATION

7-II.A. VERIFICATION OF LEGAL IDENTITY

OHFA will require families to furnish verification of legal identity for each household member.

Verification of Legal Identity for Adults	Verification of Legal Identity for Children
Certificate of birth, naturalization papers Church issued baptismal certificate Current, valid driver's license or Department of Motor Vehicles identification card U.S. military discharge (DD 214) Current U.S. passport	Certificate of birth Adoption papers Custody agreement Health and Human Services ID School records

If a document submitted by a family is illegible or otherwise questionable, more than one of these documents may be required.

If none of these documents can be provided and at OHFA's discretion, a third party who knows the person may attest to the person's identity. The certification must be provided in a format acceptable to OHFA and be signed in the presence of an OHFA representative or OHFA notary public.

Legal identity will be verified on an as needed basis.

7-II.B. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS [24 CFR 5.216, Notice PIH 2018-24]

The family must provide documentation of a valid social security number (SSN) for each member of the household, with the exception of individuals who do not contend eligible immigration status. Exemptions also include, existing program participants who were at least 62 years of age as of January 31, 2010, and had not previously disclosed an SSN.

Note that an individual who previously declared to have eligible immigration status may not change their declaration for the purpose of avoiding compliance with the SSN disclosure and documentation requirements or penalties associated with noncompliance with these requirements. Nor may the head of household opt to remove a household member from the family composition for this purpose.

OHFA must accept the following documentation as acceptable evidence of the social security number:

- An original SSN card issued by the Social Security Administration (SSA)
- An original SSA-issued document, which contains the name and SSN of the individual
- An original document issued by a federal, state, or local government agency, which contains the name and SSN of the individual

OHFA may only reject documentation of an SSN provided by an applicant or participant if the document is not an original document, if the original document has been altered, mutilated, or is not legible, or if the document appears to be forged.

> OHFA will explain to the applicant or participant the reasons the document is not acceptable and request that the individual obtain and submit acceptable documentation of the SSN to OHFA within 90 days.

In the case of Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy (SRO) individuals, the required documentation must be provided within 90 calendar days from the date of admission into the program. OHFA must grant one additional 90-day extension if it determines that the applicant's failure to comply was due to circumstances that were beyond the applicant's control and could not have been reasonably foreseen.

> OHFA will grant one additional 90-day extension if needed for reasons beyond the participant's control such as delayed processing of the SSN application by the SSA, natural disaster, fire, death in the family, or other emergency. If the individual fails to comply with SSN disclosure and documentation requirements upon expiration of the provided time period, OHFA will terminate the individual's assistance.

If an applicant family includes a child under 6 years of age who joined the household within the 6 months prior to the date of voucher issuance, an otherwise eligible family may be admitted to the program, and the family must provide documentation of the child's SSN within 90 days of the effective date of the initial HAP contract. A 90-day extension will be granted if the PHA determines that the participant's failure to comply was due to unforeseen circumstances and was outside of the participant's control.

> OHFA will grant one additional 90-day extension if needed for reasons beyond the applicant's control, such as delayed processing of the SSN application by the SSA, natural disaster, fire, death in the family, or other emergency.

When the participant requests to add a new household member who is at least 6 years of age, or who is under the age of 6 and has an SSN, the participant must provide the complete and

accurate SSN assigned to each new member at the time of reexamination or recertification, in addition to the documentation required to verify it. OHFA may not add the new household member until such documentation is provided.

When a participant requests to add a new household member who is under the age of 6 and has not been assigned an SSN, the participant must provide the SSN assigned to each new child and the required documentation within 90 calendar days of the child being added to the household. A 90-day extension will be granted if OHFA determines that the participant's failure to comply was due to unforeseen circumstances and was outside of the participant's control. During the period OHFA is awaiting documentation of the SSN, the child will be counted as part of the assisted household.

OHFA will grant one additional 90-day extension if needed for reasons beyond the participant's control such as delayed processing of the SSN application by the SSA, natural disaster, fire, death in the family, or other emergency.

Social security numbers must be verified only once during continuously-assisted occupancy.

OHFA will verify each disclosed SSN by:

Obtaining documentation from applicants and participants that is acceptable as evidence of social security numbers

Making a copy of the original documentation submitted, returning it to the individual, and retaining a copy in the file folder

Once the individual's verification status is classified as "verified," OHFA may, at its discretion, remove and destroy copies of documentation accepted as evidence of social security numbers. The retention of the EIV Summary Report or Income Report is adequate documentation of an individual's SSN.

Once an individual's status is classified as "verified" in HUD's EIV system, OHFA retains documentation accepted as evidence of social security numbers.

7-II.C. DOCUMENTATION OF AGE

A birth certificate or other official record of birth is the preferred form of age verification for all family members. For elderly family members an original document that provides evidence of the receipt of social security retirement benefits is acceptable.

If an official record of birth or evidence of social security retirement benefits cannot be provided, OHFA will require the family to submit other documents that support the reported age of the family member (e.g., school records, driver's license if birth year is recorded) and to provide a self-certification.

Age must be verified only once during continuously-assisted occupancy.

7-II.D. FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Applicants and program participants are required to identify the relationship of each household member to the head of household. Definitions of the primary household relationships are provided in the Eligibility chapter.

> Family relationships are verified only to the extent necessary to determine a family's eligibility and level of assistance. Certification by the head of household normally is sufficient verification of family relationships.

Marriage

> Certification by the head of household is normally sufficient verification. If OHFA has reasonable doubts about a marital relationship, OHFA will require the family to document the marriage.
>
> A marriage certificate generally is required to verify that a couple is married.
>
> In the case of a common law marriage, the couple must demonstrate that they hold themselves to be married (e.g., by telling the community they are married, calling each other husband and wife, using the same last name, filing joint income tax returns).

Separation or Divorce

> Certification by the head of household is normally sufficient verification. If OHFA has reasonable doubts about a separation or divorce, OHFA will require the family to document the divorce, or separation.
>
> A certified copy of a divorce decree, signed by a court officer, is required to document that a couple is divorced.
>
> A copy of a court-ordered maintenance or other court record is required to document a separation.
>
> If no court document is available, documentation from a community-based agency will be accepted.

Absence of Adult Member

If an adult member who was formerly a member of the household is reported to be permanently absent, the family must provide evidence to support that the person is no longer a member of the family (e.g., documentation of another address at which the person resides such as a lease or utility bill).

Foster Children and Foster Adults

Third-party verification from the state or local government agency responsible for the placement of the individual with the family is required.

7-II.E. VERIFICATION OF STUDENT STATUS

General Requirements

OHFA requires families to provide information about the student status of all students who are 18 years of age or older. This information will be verified only if:

The family reports full-time student status for an adult other than the head, spouse, or cohead.

The family reports childcare expenses to enable a family member to further their education.

The family includes a student enrolled in an *institution of higher education.*

Restrictions on Assistance to Students Enrolled in Institutions of Higher Education

This section applies only to students who are seeking assistance on their own, separately from their parents. It does not apply to students residing with parents who are seeking or receiving HCV assistance.

In accordance with the verification hierarchy described in section 7-1.B, OHFA will determine whether the student is exempt from the restrictions in 24 CFR 5.612 by verifying any one of the following exemption criteria:

The student is enrolled at an educational institution that does not meet the definition of *institution of higher education* in the Higher Education Act of 1965 (see section Exhibit 3-2).

The student is at least 24 years old.

The student is a veteran, as defined in section 3-II.E.

The student is married.

The student has at least one dependent child, as defined in section 3-II.E.

The student is a person with disabilities, as defined in section 3-II.E, and was receiving assistance prior to November 30, 2005.

If OHFA cannot verify at least one of these exemption criteria, OHFA will conclude that the student is subject to the restrictions on assistance at 24 CFR 5.612. In addition to

verifying the student's income eligibility, OHFA will then proceed to verify either the student's parents' income eligibility (see section 7-III.J) or the student's independence from their parents (see below).

Independent Student

OHFA will verify a student's independence from their parents to determine that the parents' income is not relevant for determining the student's eligibility by doing all of the following:

Both reviewing and verifying previous address information to determine whether the student has established a household separate from their parents for at least one year or reviewing and verifying documentation relevant to determining whether the student meets the U.S. Department of Education's definition of *independent student* (see section 3-II.E)

Reviewing the student's prior year income tax returns to verify the student is independent or verifying the student meets the U.S. Department of Education's definition of *independent student* (see section 3-II.E)

Requesting and obtaining written certification directly from the student's parents identifying the amount of support they will be providing to the student, even if the amount of support is $0, except in cases in which OHFA determines that the student is a *vulnerable youth* (see section 3-II.E)

7-II.F. DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITY

OHFA must verify the existence of a disability in order to allow certain income disallowances and deductions from income. OHFA is not permitted to inquire about the nature or extent of a person's disability [24 CFR 100.202(c)]. OHFA may not inquire about a person's diagnosis or details of treatment for a disability or medical condition. Under no circumstances will OHFA request a participant's medical record(s). For more information on health care privacy laws, see the Department of Health and Human Services' website at www.os.dhhs.gov.

The above-cited regulation does not prohibit the following inquiries, provided these inquiries are made of all applicants, whether or not they are persons with disabilities [VG, p. 24]:

- Inquiry into an applicant's ability to meet the requirements of ownership or tenancy
- Inquiry to determine whether an applicant is qualified for a dwelling available only to persons with disabilities or to persons with a particular type of disability
- Inquiry to determine whether an applicant for a dwelling is qualified for a priority available to persons with disabilities or to persons with a particular type of disability

- Inquiring whether an applicant for a dwelling is a current illegal abuser or addict of a controlled substance

- Inquiring whether an applicant has been convicted of the illegal manufacture or distribution of a controlled substance

Family Members Receiving SSA Disability Benefits

Verification of the receipt of disability benefits from the Social Security Administration (SSA) is sufficient verification of disability for the purpose of qualifying for waiting list preferences (if applicable) or certain income disallowances and deductions [VG, p. 23].

> For family members claiming disability who receive disability benefits from the SSA, OHFA will attempt to obtain information about disability benefits through the HUD Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system. If documentation from HUD's EIV System is not available, OHFA will request a current (dated within the last 60 days) SSA benefit verification letter from each family member claiming disability status. If the family is unable to provide the document(s), OHFA will ask the family to request a benefit verification letter by either calling SSA at 1-800-772-1213, or by requesting it from www.socialsecurity.gov. Once the applicant or participant receives the benefit verification letter they will be required to provide it to OHFA.

Family Members Not Receiving SSA Disability Benefits

Receipt of veteran's disability benefits, worker's compensation, or other non-SSA benefits based on the individual's claimed disability are not sufficient verification that the individual meets HUD's definition of disability in 24 CFR 5.403.

> For family members claiming disability who do not receive disability benefits from the SSA, a knowledgeable professional must provide third-party verification that the family member meets the HUD definition of disability. See the Eligibility chapter for the HUD definition of disability. The knowledgeable professional will verify whether the family member does or does not meet the HUD definition.

7-II.G. CITIZENSHIP OR ELIGIBLE IMMIGRATION STATUS [24 CFR 5.508]

Overview

Housing assistance is not available to persons who are not citizens, nationals, or eligible immigrants. Prorated assistance is provided for "mixed families" containing both eligible and ineligible persons. A detailed discussion of eligibility requirements is in the Eligibility chapter. This verifications chapter discusses HUD and OHFA verification requirements related to citizenship status.

The family must provide a certification that identifies each family member as a U.S. citizen, a U.S. national, an eligible noncitizen or an ineligible noncitizen and submit the documents discussed below for each family member. Once eligibility to receive assistance has been verified for an individual, it need not be collected or verified again during continuously-assisted occupancy. [24 CFR 5.508(g)(5)]

U.S. Citizens and Nationals

HUD requires a declaration for each family member who claims to be a U.S. citizen or national. The declaration must be signed personally by any family member 18 or older and by a guardian for minors.

OHFA may request verification of the declaration by requiring presentation of a birth certificate, United States passport or other appropriate documentation.

> Family members who claim U.S. citizenship or national status will not be required to provide additional documentation unless OHFA receives information indicating that an individual's declaration may not be accurate.

Eligible Immigrants

Documents Required

All family members claiming eligible immigration status must declare their status in the same manner as U.S. citizens and nationals.

The documentation required for eligible noncitizens varies depending upon factors such as the date the person entered the U.S., the conditions under which eligible immigration status has been granted, age, and the date on which the family began receiving HUD-funded assistance. Exhibit 7-1 at the end of this chapter summarizes documents family members must provide.

PHA Verification [HCV GB, pp. 5-3 and 5-7]

For family members age 62 or older who claim to be eligible immigrants, proof of age is required in the manner described in 7-II.C. of this plan. No further verification of eligible immigration status is required.

For family members under the age of 62 who claim to be eligible immigrants, OHFA must verify immigration status with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

OHFA will follow all USCIS protocols for verification of eligible immigration status.

7-II.H. VERIFICATION OF PREFERENCE STATUS

OHFA must verify any preferences claimed by an applicant that determined placement on the waiting list.

OHFA will offer a preference to any family that has been terminated from its HCV program due to insufficient program funding. OHFA will verify this preference using OHFA's termination records.

PART III: VERIFYING INCOME AND ASSETS

Chapter 6, Part I of this plan describes in detail the types of income that are included and excluded and how assets and income from assets are handled. Any assets and income reported by the family must be verified. This part provides OHFA policies that supplement the general verification procedures specified in Part I of this chapter.

7-III.A. EARNED INCOME

Tips

Unless tip income is included in a family member's W-2 by the employer, persons who work in industries where tips are standard will be required to sign a certified estimate of tips received for the prior year and tips anticipated to be received in the coming year.

7-III.B. BUSINESS AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT INCOME

Business owners and self-employed persons will be required to provide:

> An audited financial statement for the previous fiscal year if an audit was conducted. If an audit was not conducted, a statement of income and expenses must be submitted and the business owner or self-employed person must certify to its accuracy.
>
> All schedules completed for filing federal and local taxes in the preceding year.
>
> If accelerated depreciation was used on the tax return or financial statement, an accountant's calculation of depreciation expense, computed using straight-line depreciation rules.

OHFA will provide a format for any person who is unable to provide such a statement to record income and expenses for the coming year. The business owner/self-employed person will be required to submit the information requested and to certify to its accuracy at all future reexaminations.

At any reexamination, OHFA may request documents that support submitted financial statements such as manifests, appointment books, cashbooks, or bank statements.

If a family member is self-employed, OHFA will accept the family member's certified estimate of income. If the family member has been self-employed for three (3) to twelve (12) months or more, OHFA may require the family to provide documentation of income and expenses for the review period and use that information to project income.

7-III.C. PERIODIC PAYMENTS AND PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF EARNINGS

For policies governing streamlined income determinations for fixed sources of income, please see Chapter 11.

Social Security/SSI Benefits

To verify the SS/SSI benefits of applicants, OHFA will request a current (dated within the last 60 days) SSA benefit verification letter from each family member that receives social security benefits. If the family is unable to provide the document(s), OHFA will help the applicant request a benefit verification letter from SSA's Web site at www.socialsecurity.gov or ask the family to request one by calling SSA at 1-800-772-1213. Once the applicant has received the benefit verification letter they will be required to provide it to OHFA.

To verify the SS/SSI benefits of participants, OHFA will obtain information about social security/SSI benefits through the HUD EIV System, and confirm with the participant(s) that the current listed benefit amount is correct. If the participant disputes the EIV-reported benefit amount, or if benefit information is not available in HUD systems, OHFA will request a current SSA benefit verification letter from each family member that receives social security benefits. If the family is unable to provide the document(s) OHFA will help the participant request a benefit verification letter from SSA's Web site at www.socialsecurity.gov or ask the family to request one by calling SSA at 1-800-772-1213. Once the participant has received the benefit verification letter they will be required to provide it to OHFA.

7-III.D. ALIMONY OR CHILD SUPPORT

The way OHFA will seek verification for alimony and child support differs depending on whether the family declares that it receives regular payments.

If the family declares that it ***receives regular payments***, verification will be sought in the following order.

Third-party verification form from the state or local child support enforcement agency

Third-party verification form from the person paying the support

Family's self-certification of amount received and of the likelihood of support payments being received in the future, or that support payments are not being received.

If the family declares that it ***receives irregular or no payments***, in addition to the verification process listed above, the family must provide evidence that it has taken all reasonable efforts to collect amounts due. This may include:

A statement from any agency responsible for enforcing payment that shows the family has requested enforcement and is cooperating with all enforcement efforts

If the family has made independent efforts at collection, a written statement from the attorney or other collection entity that has assisted the family in these efforts

Note: Families are not required to undertake independent enforcement action.

7-III.E. ASSETS AND INCOME FROM ASSETS

Assets Disposed of for Less than Fair Market Value

The family must certify whether any assets have been disposed of for less than fair market value in the preceding two years. OHFA needs to verify only those certifications that warrant documentation [HCV GB, p. 5-28].

OHFA will verify the value of assets disposed of only if:

OHFA does not already have a reasonable estimation of its value from previously collected information, or

The amount reported by the family in the certification appears obviously in error.

Example 1: An elderly participant reported a $10,000 certificate of deposit at the last annual reexamination and the PHA verified this amount. Now the person reports that she has given this $10,000 to her son. The PHA has a reasonable estimate of the value of the asset; therefore, reverification of the value of the asset is not necessary.

Example 2: A family member has disposed of its 1/4 share of real property located in a desirable area and has valued her share at approximately $5,000. Based upon market conditions, this declaration does not seem realistic. Therefore, the PHA will verify the value of this asset.

7-III.F. NET INCOME FROM RENTAL PROPERTY

The family must provide:

A current executed lease for the property that shows the rental amount or certification from the current tenant

A self-certification from the family members engaged in the rental of property providing an estimate of expenses for the coming year and the most recent IRS Form 1040 with Schedule E (Rental Income). If schedule E was not prepared, OHFA will require the family members involved in the rental of property to provide a self-certification of income and expenses for the previous year and may request documentation to support the statement including: tax statements, insurance invoices, bills for reasonable maintenance and utilities, and bank statements or amortization schedules showing monthly interest expense.

7-III.G. RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS

OHFA will accept written third-party documents supplied by the family as evidence of the status of retirement accounts.The type of original document that will be accepted depends upon the family member's retirement status.

Before retirement, OHFA will accept an original document from the entity holding the account with a date that shows it is the most recently scheduled statement for the account but in no case earlier than 6 months from the effective date of the examination.

Upon retirement, OHFA will accept an original document from the entity holding the account that reflects any distributions of the account balance, any lump sums taken and any regular payments.

After retirement, OHFA will accept an original document from the entity holding the account dated no earlier than 12 months before that reflects any distributions of the account balance, any lump sums taken and any regular payments.

7-III.H. INCOME FROM EXCLUDED SOURCES

A detailed discussion of excluded income is provided in Chapter 6, Part I.

OHFA must obtain verification for income exclusions only if, without verification, OHFA would not be able to determine whether the income is to be excluded. For example: If a family's 16 year old has a job at a fast food restaurant, OHFA will confirm that OHFA's records verify the child's age but will not require third-party verification of the amount earned. However, if a family claims the earned income disallowance for a source of income, both the source and the income must be verified.

OHFA will reconcile differences in amounts reported by the third party and the family only when the excluded amount is used to calculate the family share (as is the case with the earned income disallowance). In all other cases, OHFA will report the amount to be excluded as indicated on documents provided by the family.

7-III.I. ZERO ANNUAL INCOME STATUS

OHFA will check UIV sources and/or request information from third-party sources to verify that certain forms of income such as unemployment benefits, TANF, SSI, etc., are not being received by families claiming to have zero annual income.

7-III.J. STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Any financial assistance, in excess of amounts received for tuition and any other required fees and charges, that a person attending an institution of higher education receives under the Higher Education Act of 1965, from private sources, or from an institution of higher education must be considered income unless the student is over the age of 23 with dependent children or is residing with parents who are seeking or receiving HCV assistance [24 CFR 5.609(b)(9) and FR 4/10/06].

For students over the age of 23 with dependent children or students residing with parents who are seeking or receiving HCV assistance, the full amount of student financial assistance is excluded from annual income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(6)]. The full amount of student financial assistance is also excluded for students attending schools that do not qualify as institutions of higher education (as defined in Exhibit 3-2). Excluded amounts are verified only if, without verification, OHFA would not be able to determine whether or to what extent the income is to be excluded (see section 7-III.H).

For a student subject to having a portion of their student financial assistance included in annual income in accordance with 24 CFR 5.609(b)(9), OHFA will request written third-party verification of both the source and the amount. Family-provided documents from the educational institution attended by the student will be requested, as well as documents generated by any other person or entity providing such assistance, as reported by the student.

In addition, OHFA will request written verification of the student's tuition amount.

If OHFA is unable to obtain third-party written verification of the requested information, OHFA will pursue other forms of verification following the verification hierarchy in section 7-I.B.

7-III.K. PARENTAL INCOME OF STUDENTS SUBJECT TO ELIGIBILITY RESTRICTIONS

If a student enrolled at an institution of higher education is under the age of 24, is not a veteran, is not married, does not have a dependent child, and is not a person with disabilities receiving HCV assistance as of November 30, 2005, the income of the student's parents must be considered when determining income eligibility, unless the student is determined independent from their parents or a vulnerable youth in accordance with OHFA policy [24 CFR 5.612, FR 4/10/06, p. 18146, and FR Notice 9/21/16].

This provision does not apply to students residing with parents who are seeking or receiving HCV assistance. It is limited to students who are seeking or receiving assistance on their own, separately from their parents.

If OHFA is required to determine the income eligibility of a student's parents, OHFA will request an income declaration and certification of income from the appropriate parent(s) (as determined in section 3-II.E). OHFA will send the request directly to the parents, who will be required to certify to their income under penalty of perjury. The parents will be required to submit the information directly to OHFA. The required information must be submitted within 14 days of the date of OHFA's request or within any extended timeframe approved by OHFA.

OHFA reserves the right to request and review supporting documentation at any time if it questions the declaration or certification. Supporting documentation may include, but is not limited to, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax returns, consecutive and original pay stubs, bank statements, pension benefit statements, benefit award letters, and other official and authentic documents from a federal, state, or local agency.

PART IV: VERIFYING MANDATORY DEDUCTIONS

7-IV.A. DEPENDENT AND ELDERLY/DISABLED HOUSEHOLD DEDUCTIONS

The dependent and elderly/disabled family deductions require only that OHFA verify that the family members identified as dependents or elderly/disabled persons meet the statutory definitions. No further verifications are required.

Dependent Deduction

See Chapter 6 (6-II.B.) for a full discussion of this deduction. OHFA must verify that:

- Any person under the age of 18 for whom the dependent deduction is claimed is not the head, spouse, or cohead of the family and is not a foster child
- Any person age 18 or older for whom the dependent deduction is claimed is not a foster adult or live-in aide, and is a person with a disability or a full time student

Elderly/Disabled Family Deduction

See Eligibility chapter for a definition of elderly and disabled families and Chapter 6 (6-II.C.) for a discussion of the deduction. OHFA must verify that the head, spouse, or cohead is 62 years of age or older or a person with disabilities.

7-IV.B. MEDICAL EXPENSE DEDUCTION

Policies related to medical expenses are found in 6-II.D. The amount of the deduction will be verified following the standard verification procedures described in Part I.

Amount of Expense

Medical expenses will be verified through:

Written third-party documents provided by the family, such as pharmacy printouts or receipts.

OHFA will make a best effort to determine what expenses from the past are likely to continue to occur in the future. OHFA will also accept evidence of monthly payments or total payments that will be due for medical expenses during the upcoming 12 months.

Written third-party verification forms, if the family is unable to provide acceptable documentation.

If third-party or document review is not possible, written family certification as to costs anticipated to be incurred during the upcoming 12 months.

In addition, OHFA must verify that:

- The household is eligible for the deduction.
- The costs to be deducted are qualified medical expenses.
- The expenses are not paid for or reimbursed by any other source.
- Costs incurred in past years are counted only once.

Eligible Household

The medical expense deduction is permitted only for households in which the head, spouse, or cohead is at least 62, or a person with disabilities. OHFA must verify that the family meets the definition of an elderly or disabled family provided in the Eligibility chapter and as described in Chapter 7 (7-IV.A.) of this plan.

Qualified Expenses

To be eligible for the medical expenses deduction, the costs must qualify as medical expenses. See Chapter 6 (6-II.D.) for OHFA's policy on what counts as a medical expense.

Unreimbursed Expenses

To be eligible for the medical expenses deduction, the costs must not be reimbursed by another source.

The family will be required to certify that the medical expenses are not paid or reimbursed to the family from any source.

Expenses Incurred in Past Years

When anticipated costs are related to on-going payment of medical bills incurred in past years, OHFA will verify:

The anticipated repayment schedule

The amounts paid in the past, and

Whether the amounts to be repaid have been deducted from the family's annual income in past years

7-IV.C. DISABILITY ASSISTANCE EXPENSES

Policies related to disability assistance expenses are found in 6-II.E. The amount of the deduction will be verified following the standard verification procedures described in Part I.

Amount of Expense

Attendant Care

OHFA will accept written third-party documents provided by the family.

If family-provided documents are not available, OHFA will provide a third-party verification form directly to the care provider requesting the needed information.

Expenses for attendant care will be verified through:

Written third-party documents provided by the family, such as receipts or cancelled checks.

Third-party verification form signed by the provider, if family-provided documents are not available.

If third-party verification is not possible, written family certification as to costs anticipated to be incurred for the upcoming 12 months.

Auxiliary Apparatus

Expenses for auxiliary apparatus will be verified through:

Written third-party documents provided by the family, such as billing statements for purchase of auxiliary apparatus, or other evidence of monthly payments or total payments that will be due for the apparatus during the upcoming 12 months.

Third-party verification form signed by the provider, if family-provided documents are not available.

If third-party verification is not possible, written family certification of estimated apparatus costs for the upcoming 12 months.

In addition, OHFA must verify that:

- The family member for whom the expense is incurred is a person with disabilities (as described in 7-II.F above).
- The expense permits a family member, or members, to work (as described in 6-II.E.).
- The expense is not reimbursed from another source (as described in 6-II.E.).

Family Member is a Person with Disabilities

To be eligible for the disability assistance expense deduction, the costs must be incurred for attendant care or auxiliary apparatus expense associated with a person with disabilities. OHFA will verify that the expense is incurred for a person with disabilities (See 7-II.F.).

Family Member(s) Permitted to Work

OHFA must verify that the expenses claimed actually enable a family member, or members, (including the person with disabilities) to work.

OHFA will request third-party verification from a rehabilitation agency or knowledgeable medical professional indicating that the person with disabilities requires attendant care or an auxiliary apparatus to be employed, or that the attendant care or auxiliary apparatus enables another family member, or members, to work (See 6-II.E.). This documentation may be provided by the family.

If third-party verification has been attempted and is either unavailable or proves unsuccessful, the family must certify that the disability assistance expense frees a family member, or members (possibly including the family member receiving the assistance), to work.

Unreimbursed Expenses

To be eligible for the disability expenses deduction, the costs must not be reimbursed by another source.

The family will be required to certify that attendant care or auxiliary apparatus expenses are not paid by or reimbursed to the family from any source.

7-IV.D. CHILD CARE EXPENSES

Policies related to childcare expenses are found in Chapter 6 (6-II.F). The amount of the deduction will be verified following the standard verification procedures described in Part I of this chapter. In addition, OHFA must verify that:

- The child is eligible for care (12 or younger).
- The costs claimed are not reimbursed.
- The costs enable a family member to work, actively seek work, or further their education.
- The costs are for an allowable type of childcare.
- The costs are reasonable.

Eligible Child

To be eligible for the childcare deduction, the costs must be incurred for the care of a child under the age of 13. OHFA will verify that the child being cared for (including foster children) is under the age of 13 (See 7-II.C.).

Unreimbursed Expense

To be eligible for the childcare deduction, the costs must not be reimbursed by another source.

The family will be required to certify that the childcare expenses are not paid by or reimbursed to the family from any source.

Pursuing an Eligible Activity

OHFA must verify that the family member(s) that the family has identified as being enabled to seek work, pursue education, or be gainfully employed, are actually pursuing those activities.

Information to be Gathered

OHFA will verify information about how the schedule for the claimed activity relates to the hours of care provided, the time required for transportation, the time required for study (for students), the relationship of the family member(s) to the child, and any special needs of the child that might help determine which family member is enabled to pursue an eligible activity.

Seeking Work

Whenever possible OHFA will use documentation from a state or local agency that monitors work-related requirements (e.g., welfare or unemployment). In such cases, OHFA will request family-provided verification from the agency of the member's job seeking efforts to date, and require the family to submit to OHFA any reports provided to the other agency.

In the event third-party verification is not available, OHFA will provide the family with a form on which the family member must record job search efforts. OHFA will review the information at each subsequent reexamination for which this deduction is claimed.

Furthering Education

OHFA will request third-party documentation to verify that the person permitted to further their education by the childcare is enrolled and provide information about the timing of classes for which the person is registered. The documentation may be provided by the family.

Gainful Employment

OHFA will seek third-party verification of the work schedule of the person who is permitted to work by the childcare. In cases in which two or more family members could be permitted to work, the work schedules for all relevant family members may be verified. The documentation may be provided by the family.

Allowable Type of Child Care

The type of care to be provided is determined by the family, but must fall within certain guidelines, as discussed in Chapter 6.

OHFA will verify that the type of childcare selected by the family is allowable, as described in Chapter 6 (6-II.F).

OHFA will verify that the fees paid to the child care provider cover only child care costs (e.g., no housekeeping services or personal services) and are paid only for the care of an eligible child (e.g., prorate costs if some of the care is provided for ineligible family members).

OHFA will verify that the childcare provider is not an assisted family member. Verification will be made through the head of household's declaration of family members who are expected to reside in the unit.

Reasonableness of Expenses

Only reasonable childcare costs can be deducted.

The actual costs the family incurs will be compared with OHFA's established standards of reasonableness for the type of care in the locality to ensure that the costs are reasonable.

If the family presents a justification for costs that exceed typical costs in the area, OHFA will request additional documentation, as required, to support a determination that the higher cost is appropriate.

EXHIBIT 7-1: SUMMARY OF DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR NONCITIZENS [HCV GB, pp. 5-9 and 5-10]

- **All** noncitizens claiming eligible status must sign a declaration of eligible immigrant status on a form acceptable to OHFA.
- Except for persons 62 or older, all noncitizens must sign a verification consent form
- Additional documents are required based upon the person's status.

Elderly Noncitizens

- A person 62 years of age or older who claims eligible immigration status also must provide proof of age such as birth certificate, passport, or documents showing receipt of SS old-age benefits.

All other Noncitizens

- Noncitizens that claim eligible immigration status also must present the applicable USCIS document. Acceptable USCIS documents are listed below.

• Form I-551 Alien Registration Receipt Card (for permanent resident aliens)
• Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record annotated with one of the following:
  • "Admitted as a Refugee Pursuant to Section 207"
  • "Section 208" or "Asylum"
  • "Section 243(h)" or "Deportation stayed by Attorney General"
  • "Paroled Pursuant to Section 221 (d)(5) of the USCIS"
	• Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record with no annotation accompanied by:
	  • A final court decision granting asylum (but only if no appeal is taken);
	  • A letter from a USCIS asylum officer granting asylum (if application is filed on or after 10/1/90) or from a USCIS district director granting asylum (application filed before 10/1/90);
	  • A court decision granting withholding of deportation; or
	  • A letter from an asylum officer granting withholding or deportation (if application filed on or after 10/1/90).

• Form I-688 Temporary Resident Card annotated "Section 245A" or Section 210".	Form I-688B Employment Authorization Card annotated "Provision of Law 274a. 12(11)" or "Provision of Law 274a.12".

- A receipt issued by the USCIS indicating that an application for issuance of a replacement document in one of the above listed categories has been made and the applicant's entitlement to the document has been verified; or

- Other acceptable evidence. If other documents are determined by the USCIS to constitute acceptable evidence of eligible immigration status, they will be announced by notice published in the *Federal Register*

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE PHYSICAL INSPECTION OF REAL ESTATE AND RENT REASONABLENESS DETERMINATIONS

[24 CFR 5 Subpart G and Notice PIH 2024-26]

INTRODUCTION

HUD requires that all units occupied by families receiving Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Project Based Voucher (PBV) assistance meet HUD's National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) regulations and standards no later than October 1, 2025. The inspection performance standards and procedures for conducting NSPIRE inspections must be included in the administrative plan [Notice PIH 2023-28].

All units must pass an NSPIRE inspection prior to the approval of a lease (with some exceptions) and at least once every 24 months (or 36 months for small rural PHAs) during the term of the HAP contract, and at other times as needed, to determine that the unit meets NSPIRE standards. HUD also requires OHFA to determine that rents for units under the program are reasonable when compared to comparable unassisted units in the market area.

Provided they meet certain requirements, HUD permits PHAs to establish some additional local requirements in their administrative plans. The use of the term *NSPIRE* in this plan refers to the combination of both HUD and OHFA-established requirements. However, state and local codes, compliance is not part of the determination of whether a unit passes the NSPIRE standards.

This chapter explains HUD and OHFA requirements related to physical inspections and rent reasonableness as follows:

> Part I. Physical Standards. This part discusses the physical standards required of units occupied by HCV-assisted families. It also identifies affirmative habitability requirements for all units and life-threatening conditions that must be corrected in 24 hours.
>
> Part II. The Inspection Process. This part describes the types of inspections OHFA will make and the steps that will be taken when units do not meet NSPIRE standards.
>
> Part III. Rent Reasonableness Determinations. This part discusses the policies OHFA will use to make rent reasonableness determinations.

Special NSPIRE requirements for homeownership, manufactured homes, and other special housing types are discussed in Chapter 15 to the extent that they apply in this jurisdiction. Special requirements for the PBV and RAD PBV programs (if applicable) are discussed in Chapters 17 and 18, respectively.

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PART I: PHYSICAL STANDARDS

NSPIRE standards are published on HUD's NSPIRE website as well as in the NSPIRE Final Rule [FR Notice 5/1//2023].**8-I.A. GENERAL HUD REQUIREMENTS**

HUD Performance and Acceptability Standards

HUD's performance and acceptability standards for HCV-assisted housing are provided in 24 CFR 982.401. These standards cover the following areas:

8-I.A. INSPECTABLE AREAS [24 CFR 5.703(a)(1) and 24 CFR 5.705(a)(2)]

NSPIRE defines the inspectable areas for inspection under the standards as inside, outside and unit. However, the inspection requirement for the HCV programs only applies to units occupied or to be occupied by HCV participants and common areas and exterior areas which either service or are associated with such units

8-I.B. AFFIRMATIVE HABITABILITY REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 5.703(b), (c), and (d)]

NSPIRE provides for minimum, or affirmative, habitability requirements for each area (unit, inside, outside). These areas must meet these requirements for habitability, which are listed in Exhibit 8-1.

The inside, outside and unit must be free of health and safety hazards that pose a danger to residents. Types of health and safety concerns include, but are not limited to carbon monoxide, electrical hazards, extreme temperature, flammable materials or other fire hazards, garbage and debris, handrail hazards, infestation, lead-based paint, mold, and structural soundness [24 CFR 5.703(e).

The NSPIRE Smoke Alarm Standard does not require that smoke alarms have a sealed battery; however, upon the effective date of the Public and Federally Assisted Housing Fire Safety Act of 2022 on December 29, 2024, sealed batteries *will* be required.

8-I.C. MODIFICATIONS TO PROVIDE ACCESSIBILITY [24 CFR 100.203; Notice 2003-31; and Notice PIH 2014-02]

Under the Fair Housing Act of 1988 an owner must make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, or services if necessary for a person with disabilities to use the housing and must not refuse the request of a family that contains a person with a disability to make necessary and reasonable modifications to the unit if such modification is necessary to afford the person with a disability full enjoyment of the premises. Such modifications are at the family's expense. The owner may, where it is reasonable to do so, require restoration of the unit to its original condition (reasonable wear and tear excepted) if the modification would interfere with the owner or next occupant's full enjoyment of the premises. The owner may not increase a customarily required security deposit. However, the landlord may negotiate a restoration agreement that requires the family to restore the unit and, if necessary to ensure the likelihood of restoration, may require the tenant to pay a reasonable amount into an interest- bearing escrow account over a reasonable period of time. The interest in any such account accrues to the benefit of the tenant. The owner may also require reasonable assurances that the quality of the work will be acceptable and that any required building permits will be obtained. [24 CFR 100.203; Notice 2003-31].

Modifications to units to provide access for a person with a disability must meet all applicable NSPIRE requirements and conform to the design, construction, or alteration of facilities contained in the UFAS and the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) [28 CFR 35.151(c) and Notice 2003-31] See Chapter 2 of this plan for additional information on reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities.

> Any owner that intends to negotiate a restoration agreement or require an escrow account must submit the agreement(s) to OHFA for review.

8-I.D. ADDITIONAL LOCAL REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 5.705(a)(3) and Notice PIH 2023-28]

OHFA may impose variations to the NSPIRE standards as long as the additional criteria are not likely to adversely affect the health or safety of participant families or severely restrict housing choices for families. HUD approval is required for variations to NSPIRE standards and approved variations must be added to the administrative plan.

HUD may approve inspection criteria variations if the variations apply standards in local housing codes or other codes adopted by OHFA or because of local climatic or geographic conditions. Acceptability criteria variations may only be approved by HUD if such variations either meet or exceed the performance requirements or significantly expand affordable housing opportunities for families assisted under the program.

> OHFA has not requested any HUD-approved variations to NSPIRE standards.

8-I.E. LIFE-THREATENING DEFICIENCIES [Notice PIH 2023-28]

HUD previously required OHFA to define life-threatening conditions in the administrative plan. The NSPIRE standards now describe those conditions which are considered life-threatening and must be corrected within 24 hours.

The following are a list of life-threatening deficiencies under NSPIRE:

Inspectable Item	Deficiency
Call-for-Aid System	System is blocked, or pull cord is higher than 6 inches off the floor.
	System does not function properly
Carbon Monoxide Alarm	Carbon monoxide alarm is missing, not installed, or not installed in a proper location.
	Carbon monoxide alarm is obstructed.
	Carbon monoxide alarm does not produce an audio or visual alarm when tested.
Chimney	A visually accessible chimney, flue, or firebox connected to a fireplace or wood-burning appliance is incomplete or damaged such that it may not safely contain fire and convey smoke and combustion gases to the exterior.
	Chimney exhibits signs of structural failure.
Clothes Dryer Exhaust Ventilation	Electric dryer transition duct is detached or missing.
	Gas dryer transition duct is detached or missing.
	Electric dryer exhaust ventilation system has restricted airflow.
	Dryer transition duct is constructed of unsuitable material.
	Gas dryer exhaust ventilation system has restricted airflow.
Door – Entry	Entry door is missing.
Door – Fire Labeled	Fire labeled door is missing.
Egress	Obstructed means of egress.
	Sleeping room is located on the third floor or below and has an obstructed rescue opening.
	Fire escape is obstructed.
Electrical – Conductor, Outlet, and Switch	Outlet or switch is damaged.
	Exposed electrical conductor.
	Water is currently in contact with an electrical conductor.
Electrical – Service Panel	The overcurrent protection device is damaged.
Exit Sign	Exit sign is damaged, missing, obstructed, or not adequately illuminated.
Fire Escape	Fire escape component is damaged or missing.
Fire Extinguisher	Fire extinguisher pressure gauge reads over or under-charged.
	Fire extinguisher service tag is missing, illegible, or expired.

Inspectable Item	Deficiency
	Fire extinguisher is damaged or missing.
Flammable and Combustible Items	Flammable or combustible item is on or within 3 feet of an appliance that provides heat for thermal comfort or a fuel-burning water heater; OR Improperly stored chemicals.
Guardrail	Guardrail is missing or not installed.
	Guardrail is not functionally adequate.
Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC)	The inspection date is on or between October 1 and March 31 and the permanently installed heating source is not working or the permanently installed heating source is working and the interior temperature is below 64 degrees Fahrenheit.
	Unvented space heater that burns gas, oil, or kerosene is present.
	Combustion chamber cover or gas shutoff valve is missing from a fuel burning heating appliance.
	Fuel burning heating system or device exhaust vent is misaligned, blocked, disconnected, improperly connected, damaged, or missing.
Leak – Gas or Oil	Natural gas, propane, or oil leak.
Mold-like Substance	Presence of mold-like substance at extremely high levels is observed visually.
Smoke Alarm	Smoke alarm is not installed where required.
	Smoke alarm is obstructed.
	Smoke alarm does not produce an audio or visual alarm when tested.
Sprinkler Assembly	Sprinkler head assembly is encased or obstructed by an item or object that is within 18 inches of the sprinkler head.
	Sprinkler assembly component is damaged, inoperable, or missing and it is detrimental to performance.
	Sprinkler assembly has evidence of corrosion.
	Sprinkler assembly has evidence of foreign material that is detrimental to performance.
Structural System	Structural system exhibits signs of serious failure.
Toilet	Only 1 toilet was installed, and it is missing.
Water Heater	Chimney or flue piping is blocked, misaligned, or missing.
	Gas shutoff valve is damaged, missing, or not installed.

However, OHFA may add additional deficiencies which the OHFA considers life-threatening provided they are described in the administrative plan.

In addition to those listed under the NSPIRE standards, the following are considered life-threatening conditions:

Utilities not in service, including no running hot water**8-I.F. OWNER AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES [24 CFR 982.404]**

Family Responsibilities

The family is responsible for correcting the following deficiencies:

- Tenant-paid utilities not in service
- Failure to provide or maintain appliances owned by the family
- Damage to the unit or premises caused by a household member or guest beyond normal wear and tear.

If a family fails to correct a family-caused life-threatening condition as required by the OHFA, OHFA will enforce the family obligations. See 8-II.H.

Damages beyond ordinary wear and tear will be considered to be damages which could be assessed against the security deposit under state law or in court practice.

Owner Responsibilities

The owner must maintain the unit in accordance with NSPIRE regulations and standards. The owner is not responsible for a breach of the HQS that is not caused by the owner, and for which the family is responsible (as provided in 24 CFR 982.404(b) and 982.551(c)).

The owner is responsible for all NSPIRE violations not listed as a family responsibility above, even if the violation is caused by the family's living habits (e.g., vermin infestation). However, if the family's actions constitute a serious or repeated lease violation, the owner may take legal action to evict the family.

The owner will be required to repair an inoperable smoke detector unless OHFA determines that the family has intentionally disconnected it (by removing batteries or other means). In this case, the family will be required to repair the smoke detector within 24 hours.

If an owner fails to correct life-threatening conditions as required by OHFA, OHFA will enforce the NSPIRE standards in accordance with HUD requirements. See 8-II-G.

8-I.G. LEAD-BASED PAINT

OHFA and owners must comply with the requirements and timelines in 24 CFR Part 35 Subpart M—Tenant-Based Rental Assistance and Subpart H—Project-Based Assistance. PHAs and owners are reminded that any deteriorated paint in target housing, or other lead-based paint hazard identified through a lead-based paint risk assessment or lead-based paint inspection is considered a violation of NSPIRE standards.

For the HCV program, Subpart M applies to units where a child under age six resides or is expected to reside, common areas that service that unit, and exterior painted surfaces associated with that unit or common areas. For project-based programs, Subpart H applies to assisted units and common areas of the property regardless of whether a child under age six resides or is expected to reside in the unit. NSPIRE does not alter any of the lead-based paint requirements in Part 35 for these programs.

Special Requirements for Children with Elevated Blood Lead Level [24 CFR 35.1225; FR Notice 1/13/17; Notice PIH 2017-13]

If OHFA is notified by a public health department or other medical health care provider, or verifies information from a source other than a public health department or medical health care provider, that a child of less than six years of age, living in an HCV-assisted unit has been identified as having an elevated blood lead level, OHFA must complete an environmental investigation of the dwelling unit within 15 calendar days after being notified by a public health department or other medical health care provider. The environmental investigation must be completed in accordance with program requirements, and the result of the environmental investigation must be immediately provided to the owner of the dwelling unit. In cases where the public health department has already completed an evaluation of the unit, this information must be provided to the owner.

Within 30 days after receiving the environmental investigation report from OHFA, or the evaluation from the public health department, the owner is required to complete the reduction of identified lead-based paint hazards in accordance with the lead-based paint regulations [24 CFR 35.1325 and 35.1330; 40 CFR 745.227]. If the owner does not complete the "hazard reduction" as required, the dwelling unit is in violation of HQS and the PHA will take action in accordance with Section 8-II.G.

OHFA reporting requirements, and data collection and record keeping responsibilities related to children with an elevated blood lead level are discussed in Chapter 16.

8-I.H. VIOLATION OF SPACE STANDARDS [24 CFR 5.703(d)(5)]

Units assisted under the HCV or PBV programs must have at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two persons. A living room may be used as sleeping (bedroom) space, but no more than two persons may occupy the space [HCV GB p. 10-6]. Each habitable room must have two working outlets or one working outlet and a permanent light. HUD defines a *habitable room* as a room in a building for living, sleeping, eating, or cooking, but excluding bathrooms, toilet rooms, closets, hallways, storage or utility spaces, and similar areas [FR Notice 5/11/23].

A unit that does not meet these space standards is defined as *overcrowded*.

If OHFA determines that a unit is overcrowded because of an increase in family size or a change in family composition, OHFA must issue the family a new voucher, and the family and OHFA must try to find an acceptable unit as soon as possible. If an acceptable unit is available for rental by the family, OHFA must terminate the HAP contract in accordance with its terms.

PART II: THE INSPECTION PROCESS

8-II.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR 982.405]

Types of Inspections

OHFA conducts the following types of inspections as needed. Each type of inspection is discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

- *Initial Inspections*. OHFA conducts initial inspections in response to a request from the family to approve a unit for participation in the HCV program.
- *Annual/Biennial Inspections*. HUD requires OHFA to inspect each unit under lease at least annually or biennially (or triennially for small rural PHAs as defined in 24 CFR 982.305(b)(2)), depending on OHFA policy, to confirm that the unit still meets NSPIRE standards.
- *Special Inspections.* A special inspection may be requested by the family as a result of problems identified with a unit between annual inspections.
- *Quality Control Inspections.* HUD requires that a sample of units be inspected by a supervisor or other qualified individual to evaluate the work of the inspector(s) and to ensure that inspections are performed in compliance with the NSPIRE standards.

Inspection Costs [Notice PIH 2016-05; 24 CFR 5.705(d)]

OHFA may not charge the family for unit inspections or reinspections [24 CFR 982.405(e)].

OHFA may not charge the owner for the inspection of the unit prior to the initial term of the lease or for a first inspection during assisted occupancy of the unit. However, OHFA may charge a reasonable fee to owners for reinspections in two situations: when the owner notifies OHFA

that a repair has been made but the deficiency has not been corrected, and when the time for repairs has elapsed and the deficiency has not been corrected. Fees may not be imposed for tenant-caused damages, for cases in which the inspector could not gain access to the unit, or for new deficiencies discovered during a reinspection.

The owner may not pass the cost of a reinspection fee to the family. Reinspection fees must be added to OHFA's administrative fee reserves and may only be used for activities related to the provision of tenant-based assistance.

OHFA will not charge a fee for failed reinspections.

Remote Video Inspections (RVIs) [Notice PIH 2020-31]

As an alternative to some or all on-site inspections, OHFA may, but is not required to, perform NSPIRE inspections from a remote location using video streaming technology and a proxy at the inspection site. Since there may be some circumstances in which the application of technology provides insufficient information or evidence to allow the OHFA to make appropriate determinations about whether a condition violates NSPIRE standards, Notice PIH 2020-31 requires that if OHFA chooses to implement RVIs, OHFA should have policies and procedures in place to address such limitations.

OHFA will not conduct any inspection using RVI.

Notice and Scheduling

The family must allow OHFA to inspect the unit at reasonable times with reasonable notice [24 CFR 982.551(d)].

Both the family and the owner will be given reasonable notice of all inspections. Except in the case of a life-threatening emergency, reasonable notice is considered to be not less than 48 hours. Inspections may be scheduled between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Generally, inspections will be conducted on business days only. In the case of a life-threatening emergency, OHFA will give as much notice as possible, given the nature of the emergency.

Owner and Family Inspection Attendance

HUD permits OHFA to set policy regarding family and owner presence at the time of inspection [HCV GB p. 10-27].

When a family occupies the unit at the time of inspection an authorized adult must be present for the inspection. The presence of the owner or the owner's representative is encouraged but is not required.

At initial inspection of a vacant unit, OHFA will inspect the unit in the presence of the owner or owner's representative. The presence of a family representative will be required.

8-II.B. INITIAL INSPECTION

Approving Units [FR Notice 1/18/17; Notice PIH 2017-20; and 24 CFR 982.406]

HUD regulations require that units assisted under the HCV program be inspected to determine that the units meet NSPIRE standards before OHFA approves assisted tenancy. However, while OHFA is required to conduct an inspection prior to approving assisted tenancy, OHFA have two options for bringing units under HAP contract (or, in the case of PBV, approving occupancy and the execution of a lease) more quickly. OHFA may, but is not required to approve assisted tenancy and start HAP if the unit:

- Fails the initial inspection, but only if no life-threatening deficiencies are identified.
- Passed an alternative inspection in the last 24 months.

Otherwise, if neither of the above provisions are adopted, OHFA must determine that the unit the family selects meets NSPIRE standards prior to approving tenancy.

OHFA will not rely on alternative inspections and will conduct an HQS inspection for each unit prior to executing a HAP contract with the owner.

OHFA may approve assisted tenancy and start HAP for new participants or portability transfers that fails an HQS inspection, if the deficiencies identified during the inspection are non-life-threatening and there are no more than eight inspection deficiencies.

Non-life threatening conditions are defined as any conditions that would fail to meet the housing quality standards under 24 CFR 982.401 and do not meet the definition of *life-threatening* as defined in Section 8-I.C., Life-Threatening Conditions. Prior to approving assisted tenancy and executing the HAP contract, OHFA will ensure that the unit does not have any life-threatening deficiencies.

OHFA will send written notice to the owner listing any non-life-threatening deficiencies and providing the owner with 30 calendar days, or an OHFA-approved extension, to comply with HQS. If the non-life-threatening conditions are not corrected within notice period, OHFA will abate HAP until the unit is in compliance with HQS. OHFA will follow abatement policies listed in Section 8-II.G., Enforcing Owner Compliance.

The owner may be in abatement for a maximum of 90 days before OHFA terminates the HAP contract in accordance with Section 8-II.G., Enforcing Owner Compliance.

If the initial inspection identifies no more than eight non-life-threatening deficiencies, OHFA will notify the family and owner of the opportunity to enter into a contract and lease. Either party may decline to enter into an assisted lease or contract. If the owner fails to correct the non-life-threatening deficiencies, OHFA will terminate the HAP contract, and the family must move to another unit in order to continue receiving assistance.

OHFA will require both the owner and family to sign the Acknowledgement of Non-Life-Threatening Contract Requirements form when entering into a non-life threatening HAP contract and lease with eight or less deficiencies.

Timing of Initial Inspections [24 CFR 982.395(b)(2)(i)]

HUD requires PHAs with fewer than 1,250 budgeted units to complete the initial inspection, determine whether the unit satisfies NSPIRE standards, and notify the owner and the family of the determination within 15 days of submission of the Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA). For PHAs with 1,250 or more budgeted units, to the extent practicable such inspection and determination must be completed within 15 days. The 15-day period is suspended for any period during which the unit is not available for inspection.

OHFA will complete the initial inspection, determine whether the unit satisfies NSPIRE standards, and notify the owner and the family of the determination within 15 days of submission of the Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA).

For PHAs with 1,250 or more budgeted units, within a reasonable time after the family submits a request for approval of the tenancy. To the extent practicable, such inspection and determination must be completed within fifteen days after the family and the owner submit a request for approval of the tenancy. The 15-day period is suspended for any period during which the unit is not available for inspection [982.305(b)(2)].

OHFA will complete the initial inspection, determine whether the unit satisfies HQS, and notify the owner and the family of the determination within a reasonable time after submission of the Scheduling Appointment Request Form for review and approval. OHFA requests the date when the unit is available for inspection to assist in scheduling.

Inspection Results and Reinspections

For new units proposed for the HCV program, life-threatening deficiencies must be resolved before the HAP contract is executed and the family moves into the unit.

If any deficiencies are identified, the owner will be notified of the deficiencies and be given a time frame to correct them. If requested by the owner, the time frame for correcting the deficiencies may be extended by OHFA for good cause. OHFA will reinspect the unit within five business days of the date the owner notifies OHFA that the required corrections have been made.

If the time period for correcting the deficiencies (or any OHFA-approved extension) has elapsed, or the unit fails at the time of the reinspection, OHFA will notify the owner and the family that the unit has been rejected and that the family must search for another unit. OHFA may agree to conduct a second reinspection, for good cause, at the request of the family and owner.

Following a failed reinspection, the family may submit a new Request for Tenancy Approval for the same unit after the owner has made repairs, if they are unable to locate another suitable unit.

Utilities

Generally, at initial lease-up the owner is responsible for demonstrating that all utilities are in working order including those utilities that the family will be responsible for paying.

Utility service must be available for testing at the time of the initial inspection**.**

Appliances

If the family is responsible for supplying the stove and/or refrigerator, OHFA will allow the stove and refrigerator to be placed in the unit after the unit has met all other NSPIRE requirements. The required appliances must be in place before the HAP contract is executed by OHFA. OHFA will execute the HAP contract based upon a certification from the family that the appliances have been installed and are working. A confirmatory inspection will be scheduled within 30 days of HAP contract approval.

8-II.C. ANNUAL/BIENNIAL INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.405 and 982.406; Notice PIH 2016-05]

HUD requires OHFA to inspect each unit under HAP contract at least biennially (or triennially for small rural PHAs), to confirm that the unit still meets NSPIRE standards. The inspection may be conducted in conjunction with the family's annual reexamination but also may be conducted separately.

Each unit under HAP contract must be inspected biennially within 24 months of the last full inspection. OHFA reserves the right to require annual inspections of any unit or owner at any time.

OHFA will not rely on alternative inspection standards.

Scheduling the Inspection

If an adult cannot be present on the scheduled date, the family should request that the OHFA reschedule the inspection. OHFA and family will agree on a new inspection date that generally should take place within five business days of the originally scheduled date. OHFA may schedule an inspection more than five business days after the original date for good cause.

If the family misses the first scheduled appointment without requesting a new inspection date, OHFA will automatically schedule a second inspection. If the family misses two scheduled inspections without OHFA approval, OHFA will consider the family to have violated its obligation to make the unit available for inspection. This may result in termination of the family's assistance in accordance with Chapter 12.

8-II.D. SPECIAL INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.405(g)]

If a participant family or government official reports a life-threatening condition which the owner would be required to repair within 24 hours, OHFA must inspect the unit within 24 hours of notification. If the reported condition is not life-threatening, OHFA must inspect the unit within 15 days of notification.

During a special inspection, OHFA generally will inspect only those deficiencies that were reported. However, the inspector will record any additional deficiencies that are observed and will require the responsible party to make the necessary repairs.

If the annual/biennial inspection has been scheduled or is due within 90 days of the date the special inspection is scheduled OHFA may elect to conduct a full annual/biennial inspection.

8-II.E. QUALITY CONTROL INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.405(b); 24 CFR 985.3(e); HCV GB, p. 10-32]

HUD requires a OHFA supervisor or other qualified person to conduct quality control inspections of a sample of units to ensure that each inspector is conducting accurate and complete inspections and that there is consistency in the application of the NSPIRE standards.

The unit sample must include only units that have been inspected within the preceding three months. The selected sample should be drawn to represent a cross section of neighborhoods and the work of a cross section of inspectors.

8-II.F. INSPECTION RESULTS AND REINSPECTIONS FOR UNITS UNDER HAP CONTRACT

Correction Timeframes

Each deficiency is identified in the NPSIRE standards as either life-threatening, severe, moderate, or low.

For units under HAP contract, life-threatening deficiencies must be corrected within 24 hours after notice has been provided. All other non-life-threatening deficiencies (severe and moderate) must be corrected within 30 days (or a OHFA-approved extension) after notice has been provided. If low deficiencies are present in a unit, these deficiencies result in a pass and would only be noted by the inspector for informational purposes.

Notification of Corrective Actions

The owner and the family will be notified in writing of the results of all inspections. When an inspection identifies deficiencies, OHFA will determine (1) whether or not the failure is a life-threatening condition and (2) whether the family or owner is responsible.

When life-threatening deficiencies are identified, OHFA will immediately notify both parties by telephone or email. The notice will specify who is responsible for correcting the violation. The corrective actions must be taken within 24 hours of the OHFA's notice.

When failures that are severe or moderate are identified, OHFA will send the owner and the family a written notification of the inspection results within five business days of the inspection. The written notice will specify who is responsible for correcting the violation, and the time frame within which the failure must be corrected. Generally, not more than 30 days will be allowed for the correction. If low deficiencies are identified, these deficiencies will only be noted for informational purposes.

The notice of inspection results will inform the owner that if life-threatening conditions are not corrected within 24 hours, and non-life-threatening conditions are not corrected within the specified time frame (or any OHFA-approved extension), the owner's HAP will be abated in accordance with OHFA policy (see 8-II.G.).

Likewise, in the case of family caused deficiencies, the notice will inform the family that if corrections are not made within the specified time frame (or any OHFA-approved extension, if applicable) the family's assistance will be terminated in accordance with OHFA policy (see Chapter 12).

Extensions

For life-threatening deficiencies, OHFA cannot grant an extension to the 24-hour corrective action period. For conditions that are severe or moderate, OHFA may grant an exception to the required time frames for correcting the violation, if OHFA determines that an extension is appropriate.

Extensions will be granted in cases where OHFA has determined that the owner has made a good faith effort to correct the deficiencies and is unable to for reasons beyond the owner's control. Reasons may include, but are not limited to:

A repair cannot be completed because required parts or services are not available.

A repair cannot be completed because of weather conditions.

A reasonable accommodation is needed because the family includes a person with disabilities.

The length of the extension will be determined on a case-by-case basis, but will not exceed 60 days, except in the case of delays caused by weather conditions. In the case of weather conditions, extensions may be continued until the weather has improved sufficiently to make repairs possible. The necessary repairs must be made within 15 calendar days, once the weather conditions have subsided.

Reinspections

OHFA will conduct a reinspection immediately following the end of the corrective period, or any OHFA approved extension.

The family and owner will be given reasonable notice of the reinspection appointment. If the deficiencies have not been corrected by the time of the reinspection, OHFA will send a notice of abatement to the owner, or in the case of family caused violations, a notice of termination to the family, in accordance with OHFA policies. If OHFA is unable to gain entry to the unit in order to conduct the scheduled reinspection, OHFA will consider the family to have violated its obligation to make the unit available for inspection. This may result in termination of the family's assistance in accordance with Chapter 12.

OHFA will not accept self-certification of repairs. Photos or other documentation of repairs will not be accepted in lieu of a reinspection.

8-II.G. ENFORCING OWNER COMPLIANCE

If the owner fails to maintain the dwelling unit in accordance with NSPIRE standards, OHFA must take prompt and vigorous action to enforce the owner obligations.

HAP Abatement

If an owner fails to correct deficiencies by the time specified by OHFA, HUD requires OHFA to abate housing assistance payments no later than the first of the month following the specified correction period (including any approved extension) [24 CFR 985.3(f)]. No retroactive payments will be made to the owner for the period of time the rent was abated. Owner rents are not abated as a result of deficiencies that are the family's responsibility.

The OHFA will make all HAP abatements effective the first of the month following the expiration of OHFA specified correction period (including any extension).

OHFA will inspect abated units within five business days of the owner's notification that the work has been completed. Payment will resume effective on the day the unit passes inspection.

During any abatement period the family continues to be responsible for its share of the rent. The owner must not seek payment from the family for abated amounts and may not use the abatement as cause for eviction.

HAP Contract Termination

OHFA must decide how long any abatement period will continue before the HAP contract will be terminated. OHFA should not terminate the contract until the family finds another unit, provided the family does so in a reasonable time [HCV GB p. 10-29] and must give the owner reasonable notice of the termination. OHFA will issue a voucher to permit the family to move to another unit as described in Chapter 10.

The maximum length of time that HAP may be abated is 90 days. However, if the owner completes corrections and notifies the PHA before the termination date of the HAP contract, OHFA may rescind the termination notice if (1) the family still resides in the unit and wishes to remain in the unit and (2) the unit passes inspection.

Reasonable notice of HAP contract termination by OHFA is 30 days.

8-II.H. ENFORCING FAMILY COMPLIANCE [24 CFR 982.404(b)]

Families are responsible for correcting any deficiencies listed in paragraph 8-I.D. If the family fails to correct a violation within the period allowed by OHFA (and any extensions), OHFA will terminate the family's assistance, according to the policies described in Chapter 12.

If the owner carries out a repair for which the family is responsible under the lease, the owner may bill the family for the cost of the repair.

PART III: RENT REASONABLENESS [24 CFR 982.507]

8-III.A. OVERVIEW

Except in the case of certain LIHTC- and HOME-assisted units, no HAP contract can be approved until OHFA has determined that the rent for the unit is reasonable. The purpose of the rent reasonableness test is to ensure that a fair rent is paid for each unit rented under the HCV program.

HUD regulations define a reasonable rent as one that does not exceed the rent charged for comparable, unassisted units in the same market area. HUD also requires that owners not charge more for assisted units than for comparable units on the premises. This part explains the method used to determine whether a unit's rent is reasonable.

8-III.B. WHEN RENT REASONABLENESS DETERMINATIONS ARE REQUIRED

Owner-Initiated Rent Determinations

OHFA must make a rent reasonableness determination at initial occupancy and whenever the owner requests a rent adjustment.

The owner and family first negotiate the rent for a unit. OHFA (or independent agency in the case of PHA-owned units) will assist the family with the negotiations upon request. At initial occupancy, OHFA must determine whether the proposed rent is reasonable before a HAP Contract is signed. The owner must not change the rent during the initial lease term. Subsequent requests for rent adjustments must be consistent with the lease between the owner and the family. Rent increases will not be approved unless any failed items identified by the most recent inspection have been corrected.

After the initial occupancy period, the owner may request a rent adjustment in accordance with the owner's lease. For rent increase requests after initial lease-up, OHFA may request owners to provide information about the rents charged for other units on the premises, if the premises include more than four units. In evaluating the proposed rents in comparison to other units on the premises, OHFA will consider unit size and length of tenancy in the other units.

OHFA will determine whether the requested increase is reasonable within 14 business days of receiving the request from the owner. The owner will be notified of the determination in writing.

All rents adjustments will be effective the first of the month following 60 days after OHFA's receipt of the owner's request or on the date specified by the owner, whichever is later.

OHFA and HUD-Initiated Rent Reasonableness Determinations

HUD requires OHFA to make a determination of rent reasonableness (even if the owner has not requested a change) if there is a 10 percent decrease in the Fair Market Rent that goes into effect at least 60 days before the contract anniversary date. HUD also may direct OHFA to make a determination at any other time. OHFA may decide that a new determination of rent reasonableness is needed at any time.

In addition to the instances described above, OHFA will make a determination of rent reasonableness at any time after the initial occupancy period if: (1) OHFA determines that the initial rent reasonableness determination was in error or (2) OHFA determines that the information provided by the owner about the unit or other units on the same premises was incorrect.

LIHTC and HOME-Assisted Units [24 CFR 982.507(c)]

For units receiving low-income housing tax credits (LIHTCs) or units assisted under HUD's HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program, a rent comparison with unassisted units is not required if the voucher rent does not exceed the rent for other LIHTC or HOME-assisted units in the project that are not occupied by families with tenant-based assistance.

For LIHTCs, if the rent requested by the owner does exceed the LIHTC rents for non-voucher families, OHFA must perform a rent comparability study in accordance with program regulations. In such cases, the rent shall not exceed the lesser of: (1) the reasonable rent as determined from the rent comparability study; or (2) the payment standard established by OHFA for the unit size involved.

8-III.C. HOW COMPARABILITY IS ESTABLISHED

Factors to Consider

HUD requires OHFA to take into consideration the factors listed below when determining rent comparability. OHFA may use these factors to make upward or downward adjustments to the rents of comparison units when the units are not identical to the HCV-assisted unit.

- Location and age
- Unit size including the number of rooms and square footage of rooms
- The type of unit including construction type (e.g., single family, duplex, garden, low-rise, high-rise)
- The quality of the units including the quality of the original construction, maintenance and improvements made
- Amenities, services, and utilities included in the rent

Units that Must Not be Used as Comparables

Comparable units must represent unrestricted market rents. Therefore, units that receive some form of federal, state, or local assistance that imposes rent restrictions cannot be considered comparable units. These include units assisted by HUD through any of the following programs: Section 8 project-based assistance, Section 236 and Section 221(d)(3) Below Market Interest Rate (BMIR) projects, HOME or Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program-assisted units in which the rents are subsidized; units subsidized through federal, state, or local tax credits; units subsidized by the Department of Agriculture rural housing programs, and units that are rent-controlled by local ordinance [Notice PIH 2002-22, Notice PIH 2005-20 and Notice PIH 2020-19].

Note: Notice Notice PIH 2020-19, issued August 21, 2020, provides further guidance on the issue of what constitutes an assisted unit.

Rents Charged for Other Units on the Premises

The Request for Tenancy Approval (HUD-52517) requires owners to provide information, on the form itself, about the rent charged for other unassisted comparable units on the premises if the premises include more than 4 units.

By accepting OHFA's payment each month the owner certifies that the rent is not more than the rent charged for comparable unassisted units on the premises. If asked to do so, the owner must give OHFA information regarding rents charged for other units on the premises.

8-III.D. PHA RENT REASONABLENESS METHODOLOGY

How Market Data is Collected

OHFA will collect and maintain data on market rents in OHFA's jurisdiction. Information sources include newspapers, realtors, market surveys, inquiries of owners and other available sources. The data will be maintained by bedroom size and market areas. Market areas may be defined by zip codes, census tract, neighborhood, and identifiable natural or man-made boundaries. The data will be updated on an ongoing basis and rent information that is more than 12 months old will be eliminated from the database.

OHFA utilizes www.affordablehousing.com to maintain and process rent reasonableness determinations to meet HUD requirements.

How Rents are Determined

The rent for a unit proposed for HCV assistance will be compared to the rent charged for comparable units in the same market area. OHFA will develop a range of prices for comparable units by bedroom size within defined market areas. Units proposed for HCV assistance will be compared to the units within this rent range. Because units may be similar, but not exactly like the unit proposed for HCV assistance, OHFA may make adjustments to the range of prices to account for these differences.

The adjustment must reflect the local market. Not all differences in units require adjustments (e.g., the presence or absence of a garbage disposal may not affect the rent in some market areas).

Adjustments may vary by unit type (e.g., a second bathroom may be more valuable in a three-bedroom unit than in a two-bedroom).

The adjustment must reflect the rental value of the difference—not its construction costs (e.g., it might cost $20,000 to put on a new roof, but the new roof might not make any difference in what a tenant would be willing to pay because rental units are presumed to have functioning roofs).

- When a comparable project offers rent concessions (e.g., first month rent-free, or reduced rent) reported monthly rents will be adjusted accordingly. For example, if a comparable project reports rents of $500/month but new tenants receive the first month's rent free, the actual rent for the unit would be calculated as follows: $500 x 11 months = 5500/12 months = actual monthly rent of $488.

OHFA will notify the owner of the rent OHFA can approve based upon its analysis of rents for comparable units. The owner may submit information about other comparable units in the market area. The OHFA will confirm the accuracy of the information provided and consider this additional information when making rent determinations. The owner must submit any additional information within five business days of the OHFA request for information or the owner’s request to submit information

EXHIBIT 8-1: AFFIRMATIVE HABITABILITY REQUIREMENTS

Affirmative Habitability Requirements: Inside
Must include at least 1 battery-operated or hard-wired smoke detector, in proper working condition, on each level of the property.
Must meet or exceed the carbon monoxide detection standards set by the Secretary through *Federal Register* notification.
Any outlet installed within 6 feet of a water source must be GFCI protected.
Must have a guardrail when there is an elevated walking surface with a drop off of 30 inches or greater measured vertically.
Must have permanently mounted light fixtures in any kitchens and each bathroom.
May not contain unvented space heaters that burn gas, oil or kerosene.

Affirmative Habitability Requirements: Outside
Any outlet installed within 6 feet of a water source must be GFCI-protected.
Must have a guardrail when there is an elevated walking surface with a drop off of 30 inches or greater measured vertically.

Affirmative Habitability Requirements: Unit
Must have hot and cold running water in the bathroom and kitchen, including an adequate source of safe drinking water in the bathroom and kitchen.
Must include its own bathroom or sanitary facility that is in proper operating condition and usable in privacy. It must contain a sink, a bathtub or shower, and an interior flushable toilet.
Must have at least one battery-operated or hard-wired smoke detector, in proper working condition, in the following locations: • On each level of the unit AND • Inside each bedroom or sleeping area AND • With 21 feet of any door toa bedroom measured along a path of travel AND • Where a smoke detector is installed outside a bedroom is separated from an adjacent living area by a door, a smoke detector must also be installed in the living area side of the door.
If the unit is occupied by a hearing-impaired person, the smoke detectors must have an alarm system designed for hearing-impaired persons.
Must have a living room and a kitchen area with a sink, cooking appliance, refrigerator, food preparation area and food storage area.
Must have two working outlets or one working outlet and one permanent light fixture within all habitable rooms.
Must have a permanently mounted light fixture in each bathroom and in the kitchen.
Outlets within 6 feet of water source must be GFCI-protected.
Must have permanently installed heating source.
No units may contain unvented space heaters that burn gas, oil or kerosene.
Must have a guard rail when there is an elevated walking surface with a drop off of 30 inches or greater measured vertically.
Must have at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two persons.

smoke detectors.

Structure and Materials

The dwelling unit must be structurally sound. Handrails are required when four or more steps (risers) are present, and protective railings are required when porches, balconies, and stoops are thirty inches or more off the ground. The elevator servicing the unit must be working [if there is one]. Manufactured homes must have proper tie-down devices capable of surviving wind loads common to the area.

Interior Air Quality

The dwelling unit must be free of air pollutant levels that threaten the occupants' health. There must be adequate air circulation in the dwelling unit. Bathroom areas must have one openable window or other adequate ventilation. Any sleeping room must have at least one window. If a window was designed to be opened, it must be in proper working order.

Water Supply

The dwelling unit must be served by an approved public or private water supply that is sanitary and free from contamination. Plumbing fixtures and pipes must be free of leaks and threats to health and safety.

Lead-Based Paint

Lead-based paint requirements apply to dwelling units built prior to 1978 that are occupied or can be occupied by families with children under six years of age, excluding zero bedroom dwellings. Owners must:

- Disclose known lead-based paint hazards to prospective tenants before the lease is signed,
- provide all prospective families with "Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home",
- Stabilize deteriorated painted surfaces and conduct hazard reduction activities when identified by OHFA
- Notify tenants each time such an activity is performed
- Conduct all work in accordance with HUD safe practices
- As part of ongoing maintenance, ask each family to report deteriorated paint.

For units occupied by elevated blood lead level (lead poisoned) children under six years of age, an environmental investigation must be conducted. If lead hazards are identified during the environmental investigation, the owner must complete hazard reduction activities.

See HCV GB p. 10-15 for a detailed description of these requirements. For additional information on lead-based paint requirements see 24 CFR 35, Subparts A, B, M, and R.

Access

Use and maintenance of the unit must be possible without unauthorized use of other private properties. The building must provide an alternate means of exit in case of fire.

Site and Neighborhood

The site and neighborhood must be reasonably free from disturbing noises and reverberations, excessive trash or vermin, or other dangers to the health, safety, and general welfare of the occupants.

Sanitary Condition

The dwelling unit and its equipment must be in sanitary condition and free of vermin and rodent infestation. The unit must have adequate barriers to prevent infestation.

Smoke Detectors

Smoke Alarm/detectors must be installed in accordance with and meet the requirements of the National Fire Protection Association Standard (NFPA) 74 (or its successor standards). Smoke Alarms may be wired to house power with a battery backup or powered with a 10-yr battery. If the dwelling unit is occupied by any person with a hearing impairment, smoke detectors must have an appropriate alarm system as specified in NFPA 74 (or successor standards).

Hazards and Health/Safety

The unit, interior and exterior common areas accessible to the family, the site, and the surrounding neighborhood must be free of hazards to the family's health and safety.

EXHIBIT 8-2: SUMMARY OF TENANT PREFERENCE AREAS RELATED TO HOUSING QUALITY

Note: This document provides an overview of unit and site characteristics and conditions for which the family determines acceptability. For more detailed information, see the following documents:

- Housing Choice Voucher Guidebook, Chapter 10.
- HUD Housing Inspection Manual for Section 8 Housing
- HUD Inspection Form, form HUD-52580 (3/01) and Inspection Checklist, form HUD-52580-A (9/00)

Provided the minimum housing quality standards have been met, HUD permits the family to determine whether the unit is acceptable with regard to the following characteristics.

1. *Sanitary Facilities*. The family may determine the adequacy of the cosmetic condition and quality of the sanitary facilities, including the size of the lavatory, tub, or shower; the location of the sanitary facilities within the unit; and the adequacy of the water heater.
2. *Food Preparation and Refuse Disposal*. The family selects size and type of equipment it finds acceptable. When the family is responsible for supplying cooking appliances, the family may choose to use a microwave oven in place of a conventional oven, stove, or range. When the owner is responsible for providing cooking appliances, the owner may offer a microwave oven in place of an oven, stove, or range only if other subsidized and unsubsidized units on the premises are furnished with microwave ovens only. The adequacy of the amount and type of storage space, the cosmetic conditions of all equipment, and the size and location of the kitchen are all determined by the family.
3. *Space and Security*. The family may determine the adequacy of room sizes and room locations. The family is also responsible for deciding the acceptability of the type of door and window locks.
4. *Energy conservation items*. The family may determine whether the amount of insulation, presence of absence of storm doors and windows and other energy conservation items are acceptable.
5. *Illumination and Electricity*. The family may determine whether the location and the number of outlets and fixtures (over and above those required to meet HQS standards) are acceptable or if the amount of electrical service is adequate for the use of appliances, computers, or stereo equipment.

6. *Structure and Materials. Families may determine whether minor defects, such as lack of paint, or worn flooring or carpeting will affect the livability of the unit.*
7. *Indoor Air. Families may determine whether window and door screens, filters, fans, or other devices for proper ventilation are adequate to meet the family's needs. However, if screens are present, they must be in good condition.*
8. *Sanitary Conditions. The family determines whether the sanitary conditions in the unit, including minor infestations, are acceptable.*
9. *Neighborhood conditions. Families may determine whether neighborhood conditions such as the presence of drug activity, commercial enterprises, and convenience to shopping will affect the livability of the unit.*

Families have no discretion with respect to lead-based paint standards and smoke detectors.

Chapter 9

GENERAL LEASING POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 9 covers the lease-up process from the family's submission of a Scheduling Appointment Request Form (SARF) to execution of the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract.

In order for Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) to assist a family in a particular dwelling unit, or execute a HAP contract with the owner of a dwelling unit, OHFA must determine that all the following program requirements are met:

- The unit itself must qualify as an eligible unit [24 CFR 982.305(a)]
- The unit must be inspected by OHFA and meet the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) [24 CFR 982.305(a)]
- The lease offered by the owner must be approvable and must include the required Tenancy Addendum [24 CFR 982.305(a)]
- The rent to be charged by the owner for the unit must be reasonable [24 CFR 982.305(a)]
- The owner must be an eligible owner, approvable by OHFA, with no conflicts of interest [24 CFR 982.306]
- For families initially leasing a unit only: Where the gross rent of the unit exceeds the applicable payment standard for the family, the share of rent to be paid by the family cannot exceed 40 percent of the family’s monthly adjusted income [24 CFR 982.305(a)]

9-I.A. TENANT SCREENING

OHFA has no liability or responsibility to the owner or other persons for the family's behavior or suitability for tenancy [24 CFR 982.307(a)(1)].

OHFA may elect to screen applicants for family behavior or suitability for tenancy. See Chapter 3 for a discussion of OHFA's policies with regard to screening applicant families for program eligibility [24 CFR 982.307(a)(1)].

The owner is responsible for screening and selection of the family to occupy the owner's unit. At or before OHFA approval of the tenancy, OHFA must inform the owner that screening and selection for tenancy is the responsibility of the owner [24 CFR 982.307(a)(2)]. OHFA must also inform the owner or manager or their rights and obligations under the Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) [24 CFR 5.2005(a)(2)].

OHFA must provide the owner with the family's current and prior address (as shown in OHFA's records) and the name and address (if known to OHFA) of the landlord at the family's current and prior address [24 CFR 982.307(b)(1)].

OHFA is permitted, but not required, to offer the owner other information in OHFA's possession about the family's tenancy [24 CFR 982.307(b)(2)].

OHFA's policy on providing information to the owner must be included in the family's briefing packet [24 CFR 982.307(b)(3)].

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

OHFA will not screen applicants for family behavior or suitability for tenancy.

OHFA will not provide additional screening information to the owner.

9-I.B. REQUESTING TENANCY APPROVAL [Form HUD-52517]

After the family is issued a voucher, the family must locate an eligible unit, with an owner or landlord willing to participate in the voucher program. Once a family finds a suitable unit and the owner is willing to lease the unit under the program, the owner and the family must request the PHA to approve the assisted tenancy in the selected unit.

The owner and the family must submit two documents to the PHA:

- Completed Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) – Form HUD-52517

- Copy of the proposed lease, including the HUD-prescribed Tenancy Addendum – Form HUD-52641-A

The Scheduling Appointment Request Form (SARF) contains important information about the rental unit selected by the family, including the unit address, number of bedrooms, structure type, year constructed, utilities included in the rent, and the requested beginning date of the lease, necessary for the PHA to determine whether to approve the assisted tenancy in this unit.

Owners must certify to the most recent amount of rent charged for the unit and provide an explanation for any difference between the prior rent and the proposed rent.

Owners must certify that they are not the parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother of any member of the family, unless OHFA has granted a request for reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities who is a member of the tenant household.

For units constructed prior to 1978, owners must either 1) certify that the unit, common areas, and exterior have been found to be free of lead-based paint by a certified inspector; or 2) attach a lead-based paint disclosure statement.

9-I.C. OWNER PARTICIPATION

OHFA does not formally approve an owner to participate in the HCV program. However, there are a number of criteria where OHFA may deny approval of an assisted tenancy based on past owner behavior, conflict of interest, or other owner-related issues. No owner has a right to participate in the HCV program [24 CFR 982.306(e)]

See Chapter 13 for a full discussion of owner qualification to participate in the HCV program.

9-I.D. ELIGIBLE UNITS

There are a number of criteria that a dwelling unit must meet in order to be eligible for assistance under the voucher program. Generally, a voucher-holder family may choose any available rental dwelling unit on the market in OHFA's jurisdiction. This includes the dwelling unit they are currently occupying.

Ineligible Units [24 CFR 982.352(a)]

OHFA may not assist a unit under the voucher program if the unit is a public housing or Indian housing unit; a unit receiving project-based assistance under Section 8 of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437f); nursing homes, board and care homes, or facilities providing continual psychiatric, medical, or nursing services; college or other school dormitories; units on the grounds of penal, reformatory, medical, mental, and similar public or private institutions; a unit occupied by its owner or by a person with any interest in the unit.

PHA-Owned Units [24 CFR 982.352(b)]

Otherwise eligible units that are owned or substantially controlled by the PHA issuing the voucher may also be leased in the voucher program. In order for a PHA-owned unit to be leased under the voucher program, the unit must not be ineligible housing and OHFA must inform the family, both orally and in writing, that the family has the right to select any eligible unit available for lease and that the family is free to select a PHA-owned unit without any pressure or steering by OHFA.

> OHFA does not have any eligible PHA-owned units available for leasing under the voucher program.

Special Housing Types [24 CFR 982 Subpart M]

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations permit, but do not generally require, OHFA to permit families to use voucher assistance in a number of special housing types in accordance with the specific requirements applicable to those programs. These special housing types include single room occupancy (SRO) housing, congregate housing, group home, shared housing, manufactured home space (where the family owns the manufactured home and leases only the space), cooperative housing and homeownership option. See Chapter 15 for specific information and policies on any of these housing types that OHFA has chosen to allow.

The regulations do require OHFA to permit use of any special housing type if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

Duplicative Assistance [24 CFR 982.352(c)]

A family may not receive the benefit of HCV tenant-based assistance while receiving the benefit of any of the following forms of other housing subsidy, for the same unit or for a different unit:

- Public or Indian housing assistance;
- Other Section 8 assistance (including other tenant-based assistance);
- Assistance under former Section 23 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (before amendment by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974);
- Section 101 rent supplements;
- Section 236 rental assistance payments;
- Tenant-based assistance under the HOME Program;
- Rental assistance payments under Section 521 of the Housing Act of 1949 (a program of the Rural Development Administration);
- Any local or State rent subsidy;
- Section 202 supportive housing for the elderly;
- Section 811 supportive housing for persons with disabilities; (11) Section 202 projects for non-elderly persons with disabilities (Section 162 assistance); or
- Any other duplicative federal, State, or local housing subsidy, as determined by HUD. For this purpose, 'housing subsidy' does not include the housing component of a welfare payment, a social security payment received by the family, or a rent reduction because of a tax credit.

Housing Quality Standards (HQS) [24 CFR 982.305 and 24 CFR 982.401]

In order to be eligible, the dwelling unit must be in decent, safe, and sanitary condition. This determination is made using HUD’s Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and/or equivalent state or local standards approved by HUD. See Chapter 8 for a full discussion of the HQS standards, as well as the process for HQS inspection at initial lease-up.

Unit Size

In order to be eligible, the dwelling unit must be appropriate for the number of persons in the household. A family must be allowed to lease an otherwise acceptable dwelling unit with fewer bedrooms than the number of bedrooms stated on the voucher issued to the family, provided the unit meets the applicable HQS space requirements [24 CFR 982.402(d)]. The family must be allowed to lease an otherwise acceptable dwelling unit with more bedrooms than the number of bedrooms stated on the voucher issued to the family. See Chapter 5 for a full discussion of subsidy standards.**Rent Reasonableness [24 CFR 982.305 and 24 CFR 982.507]**

In order to be eligible, the dwelling unit must have a reasonable rent. The rent must be reasonable in relation to comparable unassisted units in the area and must not be in excess of rents charged by the owner for comparable, unassisted units on the premises. See Chapter 8 for a full discussion of rent reasonableness and the rent reasonableness determination process.

Rent Burden [24 CFR 982.508]

Where a family is initially leasing a unit and the gross rent of the unit exceeds the applicable payment standard for the family, the dwelling unit rent must be at a level where the family's share of rent does not exceed 40 percent of the family's monthly-adjusted income. See Chapter 6 for a discussion of calculation of gross rent, the use of payment standards, and calculation of family income, family share of rent and HAP.

9-I.E. LEASE AND TENANCY ADDENDUM

The family and the owner must execute and enter into a written dwelling lease for the assisted unit. This written lease is a contract between the tenant family and the owner; OHFA is not a party to this contract.

The tenant must have legal capacity to enter a lease under State and local law. 'Legal capacity' means that the tenant is bound by the terms of the lease and may enforce the terms of the lease against the owner [24 CFR 982.308(a)]

Lease Form and Tenancy Addendum [24 CFR 982.308]

If the owner uses a standard lease form for rental to unassisted tenants in the locality or the premises, the lease must be in such standard form. If the owner does not use a standard lease form for rental to unassisted tenants, the owner may use another form of lease. The HAP contract prescribed by HUD contains the owner's certification that if the owner uses a standard lease form for rental to unassisted tenants, the lease is in such standard form.

All provisions in the HUD-required Tenancy Addendum must also be added word-for-word to the owner's standard lease form, for use with the assisted family. The Tenancy Addendum includes the tenancy requirements for the program and the composition of the household as approved by OHFA. As a part of the lease, the tenant shall have the right to enforce the Tenancy Addendum against the owner and the terms of the Tenancy Addendum shall prevail over any other provisions of the lease.

House Rules may be attached to the lease as an addendum and may not violate fair housing provisions or conflict with the tenancy addendum.

OHFA does not provide a model or standard dwelling lease for owners to use in the HCV program.

Lease Information [24 CFR 982.308(d)]

The assisted dwelling lease must contain all of the required information as listed below:

- The names of the owner and the tenant:
- The unit rented (address, apartment number, and any other information needed to identify the contract unit)
- The term of the lease (initial term and any provisions for renewal)
- The amount of the monthly rent to owner
- A specification of what utilities and appliances are to be supplied by the owner, and what utilities and appliances are to be supplied by the family

Term of Assisted Tenancy

The initial term of the assisted dwelling lease must be for at least one year [24 CFR 982.309]. The initial lease term is also stated in the HAP contract.

The HUD program regulations permit OHFA to approve a shorter initial lease term if certain conditions are met.

OHFA will not approve an initial lease term of less than one (1) year.

During the initial term of the lease, the owner may not raise the rent. [24 CFR 982.309].

Any provisions for renewal of the dwelling lease will be stated in the dwelling lease [HCV Guidebook, pg. 8-22]. There are no HUD requirements regarding any renewal extension terms, except that they must be in the dwelling lease if they exist.

OHFA may execute the HAP contract even if there is less than one year remaining from the beginning of the initial lease term to the end of the last expiring funding increment under the consolidated ACC. [24 CFR 982.309(b)].

Security Deposit [24 CFR 982.313 (a) and (b)]

The owner may collect a security deposit from the tenant. OHFA may prohibit security deposits in excess of private market practice, or in excess of amounts charged by the owner to unassisted tenants.

OHFA prohibits the owner from collecting a security deposit in excess of private market practice, or in excess of amounts charged by the owner to unassisted tenants.

Separate Non-Lease Agreements between Owner and Tenant

Owners may not demand or accept any rent payment from the family in excess of the rent to the owner minus OHFA's housing assistance payments to the owner [24 CFR 982.451(b)(4)].

The owner may not charge the tenant extra amounts for items customarily included in rent in the locality, or provided at no additional cost to unsubsidized tenants in the premises [24 CFR 982.510(c)].

OHFA permits owners and families to execute separate, non-lease agreements for services, appliances (other than range and refrigerator) and other items that are not included in the lease.

Any items, appliances, or other services that are customarily provided to unassisted families as part of the dwelling lease with those families, or are permanently installed in the dwelling unit must be included in the dwelling lease for the assisted family. These items, appliances, or services cannot be placed under a separate non-lease agreement between the owner and family. Side payments for additional rent, or for items, appliances or services customarily provided to unassisted families as part of the dwelling lease for those families, are prohibited.

Any items, appliances, or other services that are <u>not</u> customarily provided to unassisted families as part of the dwelling lease with those families, are <u>not</u> permanently installed in the dwelling unit and where the family has the sole option of <u>not</u> utilizing the item, appliance or service, may be included in a separate non-lease agreement between the owner and the family.

The family is not liable and cannot be held responsible under the terms of the assisted dwelling lease for any charges pursuant to a separate non-lease agreement between the owner and the family. Non-payment of any charges pursuant to a separate non-lease agreement between the owner and the family cannot be a cause for eviction or termination of tenancy under the terms of the assisted dwelling lease.

Separate non-lease agreements that involve additional items, appliances or other services may be considered amenities offered by the owner and may be taken into consideration when determining the reasonableness of the rent for the property.

OHFA Review of Lease

OHFA will review the dwelling lease for compliance with all applicable requirements.

If the dwelling lease is incomplete or incorrect, OHFA will notify the family and the owner of the deficiencies. Missing and corrected lease information will only be accepted as hard copies, in-person, by mail, electronically, or by fax. OHFA will not accept missing and corrected information over the phone

Because the initial leasing process is time-sensitive, OHFA will attempt to communicate with the owner and family by phone, fax, or electronically. OHFA will use mail when the parties cannot be reached by phone, fax, or electronically.

OHFA is permitted, but is not required, to review the lease to determine if the lease complies with State and local law and is permitted to decline to approve the tenancy if OHFA determines that the lease does not comply with State or local law [24 CFR 982.308(c)]

OHFA will <u>not</u> review the owner's lease for compliance with state/local law.

9-I.F. TENANCY APPROVAL [24 CFR 982.305]

After receiving the family's Scheduling Appointment Request Form, OHFA must promptly notify the family and owner whether the assisted tenancy is approved.

Prior to approving the assisted tenancy and execution of a HAP contract, OHFA must ensure that all required actions and determinations, discussed in Part I of this chapter have been completed.

These actions include ensuring that the unit is eligible; the unit has been inspected by OHFA and meets the Housing Quality Standards (HQS); the lease offered by the owner is approvable and includes the required Tenancy Addendum; the rent to be charged by the owner for the unit is reasonable; where the family is initially leasing a unit and the gross rent of the unit exceeds the applicable payment standard for the family, the share of rent to be paid by the family does not exceed 40 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income [24 CFR 982.305(a)]; the owner is an eligible owner, not disapproved by OHFA, with no conflicts of interest [24 CFR 982.306]; the family and the owner have executed the lease, including the Tenancy Addendum, and the lead-based paint disclosure information [24 CFR 982.305(b)].

OHFA will complete its determination promptly after receiving all required information.

If OHFA determines that the tenancy cannot be approved for any reason, the owner and the family will be notified in writing and given the opportunity to address any reasons for disapproval. OHFA will instruct the owner and family of the steps that are necessary to approve the tenancy.

Where the tenancy is not approvable because the unit is not approvable, the family must continue to search for eligible housing within the timeframe of the issued voucher.

If the tenancy is not approvable due to rent affordability (including rent burden and rent reasonableness), OHFA will attempt to negotiate the rent with the owner. If a new, approvable rent is negotiated, the tenancy will be approved. If the owner is not willing to negotiate an approvable rent, the family must continue to search for eligible housing within the timeframe of the issued voucher.

9-I.G. HAP CONTRACT EXECUTION [24 CFR 982.305]

The HAP contract is a written agreement between OHFA and the owner of the dwelling unit occupied by a housing choice voucher assisted family. Under the HAP contract, OHFA agrees to make housing assistance payments to the owner on behalf of a specific family occupying a specific unit and obliges the owner to comply with all program requirements.

The HAP contract format is prescribed by HUD.

If OHFA has given approval for the family of the assisted tenancy, the owner and OHFA execute the HAP contract.

The term of the HAP contract must be the same as the term of the lease [24 CFR 982.451(a)(2)].

OHFA may not pay any housing assistance payment to the owner until the HAP contract has been executed after the unit has passed the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection.

The owner and the assisted family will execute the dwelling lease and the owner must provide a copy to OHFA and the assisted family.

The owner and OHFA will execute the HAP contract. OHFA will not execute the HAP contract until the owner has submitted IRS form W-9. OHFA will ensure that the owner receives a copy of the executed HAP contract.

The following OHFA Rental Assistance (RA) representatives are authorized to execute a HAP contract on behalf of OHFA: Managers/Supervisors; Field Agents; Team Coordinators; FSS/Homeownership Coordinators; and Specialists.

See Chapter 13 for a discussion of the HAP contract and contract provisions.

9-I.H. CHANGES IN LEASE OR RENT [24 CFR 982.308]

If the tenant and the owner agree to any changes in the lease, such changes must be in writing, and the owner must immediately give OHFA a copy of such changes. The lease, including any changes, must remain in accordance with the requirements of this chapter.

Generally, OHFA approval of tenancy and execution of a new HAP contract are not required for changes in the lease. However, under certain circumstances, voucher assistance in the unit shall not be continued unless OHFA has approved a new tenancy in accordance with program requirements and has executed a new HAP contract with the owner. These circumstances include:

- Changes in lease requirements governing tenant or owner responsibilities for utilities or appliances
- Changes in lease provisions governing the term of the lease
- The family moves to a new unit, even if the unit is in the same building or complex

In these cases, if the HCV assistance is to continue, the family must submit a new Scheduling Appointment Request Form for processing. A new tenancy must then be approved in accordance with this chapter.

Where the owner is changing the amount of rent, the owner must notify OHFA of any changes in the amount of the rent to owner at least 60 days before any such changes go into effect [24 CFR 982.308(g)(4)]. OHFA requires the owner to submit a Rent Increase Request Form at least 60 days in advance of the requested effective date. OHFA will agree to such an increase only if the amount of the rent to owner is considered reasonable according to the rent reasonableness standards discussed in Chapter 8. If the requested rent is not found to be reasonable, the owner must either reduce the requested rent increase, or give the family notice in accordance with the terms of the lease.

No rent increase is permitted during the initial term of the lease [24 CFR 982.309(a)(3)].

Where the owner is requesting a rent increase, OHFA will determine whether the requested increase is reasonable promptly. The owner will be notified of the determination in writing.

Rent increases will go into effect on the first of the month following the 60-day period after the owner notifies OHFA of the rent change and OHFA approves the rent increase or on the date specified by the owner, whichever is later.

Chapter 10

MOVING WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE AND PORTABILITY

INTRODUCTION

Freedom of choice is a hallmark of the housing choice voucher (HCV) program. In general, therefore, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations impose few restrictions on where families may live or move with HCV assistance. This chapter sets forth HUD regulations and Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency's (OHFA) policies governing moves within or outside OHFA's jurisdiction in two parts:

Part I: Moving with Continued Assistance. This part covers the general rules that apply to all moves by a family assisted under OHFA's HCV program, whether the family moves to another unit within OHFA's jurisdiction or to a unit outside OHFA's jurisdiction under portability.

Part II: Portability. This part covers the special rules that apply to moves by a family under portability, whether the family moves out of or into OHFA's jurisdiction. This part also covers the special responsibilities that OHFA has under portability regulations and procedures.

PART I: MOVING WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE

10-I.A. ALLOWABLE MOVES

HUD lists six regulatory conditions under which an assisted family is allowed to move to a new unit with continued assistance. Permission to move is subject to the restrictions set forth in section 10-I.B.

- The family has a right to terminate the lease on notice to the owner (for the owner's breach or otherwise) and has given a notice of termination to the owner in accordance with the lease [24 CFR 982.354(b)(3)]. If the family terminates the lease on notice to the owner, the family must give OHFA a copy of the notice at the same time [24 CFR 982.354(d)(1)].
- The lease for the family's unit has been terminated by mutual agreement of the owner and the family [24 CFR 982.354(b)(1)(ii)].

  If the family and the owner mutually agree to terminate the lease for the family's unit, the family must give OHFA a copy of the termination agreement.

- The owner has given the family a notice to vacate, has commenced an action to evict the family, or has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the family [24 CFR 982.354(b)(2)]. The family must give OHFA a copy of any owner eviction notice [24 CFR 982.551(g)].
- The family or a member of the family is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking and the move is needed to protect the health or safety of the family or family member [24 CFR 982.354(b)(4)]. This condition applies even when the family has moved out of its unit in violation of the lease, with or without prior notification to OHFA, if the family or family member who is the victim reasonably believed that they were imminently threatened by harm from further violence if they remained in the unit [24 CFR 982.354(b)(4), 24 CFR 982.353(b)]. OHFA must adopt an emergency transfer plan (ETP) as required by regulations at 24 CFR 5.2007(e).

  - If a family requests permission to move with continued assistance or for an external transfer to another covered housing program operated by the PHA based on a claim that the move is necessary to protect the health or safety of a family member who is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, the PHA will request that the resident request the emergency transfer using form HUD-5383, and the PHA will request documentation in accordance with section 16-IX.D of this plan.

    OHFA reserves the right to waive the documentation requirement if it determines that a statement or other corroborating evidence from the family or family member will suffice. In such cases, OHFA will document the family's file.

OHFA may choose to provide a voucher to facilitate an emergency transfer of the victim without first terminating the assistance of the perpetrator.

Before granting an emergency transfer, OHFA will ensure the victim is eligible to receive continued assistance based on the citizenship or immigration status of the victim.

The PHA has adopted an emergency transfer plan, which is included as Exhibit 16-3 to this plan and discusses external transfers to other covered housing programs.

- OHFA has terminated the HAP Contract for the family's unit for the owner's breach [24 CFR 982.354(b)(1)(i)].
- OHFA determines that the family's current unit does not meet the space standards because of an increase in family size or a change in family composition. In such cases, OHFA must issue the family a new voucher, and the family and OHFA must try to find an acceptable unit as soon as possible. If an acceptable unit is available for the family, OHFA must terminate the HAP contract for the family's old unit in accordance with the HAP contract terms and must notify both the family and the owner of the termination. The HAP contract terminates at the end of the calendar month that follows the calendar month in which OHFA gives notice to the owner. [24 CFR 982.403(a) and (c)]

10-I.B. RESTRICTIONS ON MOVES

A family's right to move is generally contingent upon the family's compliance with program requirements [24 CFR 982.1(b)(2)]. HUD specifies two conditions under which OHFA may deny a family permission to move and two ways in which OHFA may restrict moves by a family.

Denial of Moves

HUD regulations permit OHFA to deny a family permission to move under the following conditions:

Insufficient Funding

OHFA may deny a family permission to move either within or outside OHFA's jurisdiction if OHFA does not have sufficient funding for continued assistance [24 CFR 982.314(e)(1)]. However, Notice PIH 2016-09 significantly restricts the ability of OHFA to deny permission to move due to insufficient funding and places further requirements on OHFA regarding moves denied due to lack of funding. The requirements found in this notice are mandatory.

OHFA may deny a family permission to move on grounds that OHFA does not have sufficient funding for continued assistance if (a) the move is initiated by the family, not the owner or OHFA; (b) OHFA can demonstrate that the move will, in fact, result in

higher subsidy costs; (c) OHFA can demonstrate, in accordance with the policies in Part VIII of Chapter 16, that it does not have sufficient funding in its annual budget to accommodate the higher subsidy costs; and (d) for portability moves, the receiving PHA is not absorbing the voucher.

If the OHFA does not have sufficient funding for continued assistance, but the family must move from their unit (e.g., the unit failed inspection), the family may move to a higher cost unit if the move is within OHFA's jurisdiction. OHFA, however, will not allow the family to move under portability in this situation if the family wishes to move to a higher cost area.

For both moves within OHFA's jurisdiction and outside under portability, OHFA will not deny a move due to insufficient funding if OHFA previously approved the move and subsequently experienced a funding shortfall if the family cannot remain in their current unit. OHFA will rescind the voucher in this situation if the family will be allowed to remain in their current unit.

OHFA will create a list of families whose moves have been denied due to insufficient funding. OHFA will keep the family's request open indefinitely, and when funds become available, the families on this list will take precedence over families on the waiting list. OHFA will use the same procedures for notifying families with open requests to move when funds become available as it uses for notifying families on the waiting list (see section 4-III.D).

OHFA will inform the family of its policy regarding moves denied due to insufficient funding in a letter to the family at the time the move is denied.

Grounds for Denial or Termination of Assistance

OHFA may deny a family permission to move if it has grounds for denying or terminating the family's assistance [24 CFR 982.354(e)(2)].

If OHFA has grounds for denying or terminating a family's assistance, OHFA will act on those grounds in accordance with the regulations and policies set forth in Chapters 3 and 12, respectively.

Restrictions on Elective Moves [24 CFR 982.354(c)]

HUD regulations permit OHFA to prohibit any elective move by a participant family during the family's initial lease term. They also permit OHFA to prohibit more than one elective move by a participant family during any 12-month period. However, such prohibitions, if adopted, do not apply when the family or a member of the family is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking, and the move is needed to protect

the health or safety of the family or family member. (For the policy on documentation of abuse, see section 10-I.A.) In addition, the PHA may not establish a policy permitting moves only at reexamination [Notice PIH 2016-09].

OHFA will deny a family permission to make an elective move during the family's initial lease term. This policy applies to moves within OHFA's jurisdiction or outside it under portability.

The OHFA will also deny a family permission to make more than one elective move during any 12-month period. This policy applies to all assisted families residing in OHFA's jurisdiction.OHFA will consider exceptions to this policy for the following reasons: to protect the health or safety of a family member (e.g., lead-based paint hazards, domestic violence, witness protection programs), or to address an emergency situation over which a family has no control.

A supervisor may make exceptions to these restrictions for a valid documented reason and the family and the owner mutually agree to terminate the lease for the family's unit, the family must give OHFA a copy of the termination agreement.

In addition, OHFA will allow exceptions to these policies for purposes of reasonable accommodation of a family member who is a person with disabilities (see Chapter 2).

OHFA may restrict families to one move per year after a family's initial lease term has been fulfilled.

10-I.C. MOVING PROCESS

Notification

If a family wishes to move to a new unit, the family must notify OHFA and the owner before moving out of the old unit or terminating the lease on notice to the owner [24 CFR 982.354(d)(2)]. If the family wishes to move to a unit outside OHFA's jurisdiction under portability, the notice to OHFA must specify the area where the family wishes to move [24 CFR 982.354(d)(2)]. The notices must be in writing [24 CFR 982.5].

Approval

Upon receipt of a family's notification that it wishes to move, OHFA will determine whether the move is approvable in accordance with the regulations and policies set forth in sections 10-I.A and 10-I.B. OHFA will notify the family in writing of its determination within 14 days following receipt of the family's notification.

Reexamination of Family Income and Composition

For families approved to move to a new unit within OHFA's jurisdiction, OHFA may perform a reexamination, as applicable, in accordance with the policies set forth in Chapter 11 of this plan.

For families moving into or families approved to move out of OHFA's jurisdiction under portability, OHFA will follow the policies set forth in Part II of this chapter.

Voucher Issuance and Briefing

For families approved to move to a new unit within OHFA's jurisdiction, OHFA will issue a new voucher within 14 days of OHFA's written approval to move. No briefing is required for these families. OHFA will follow the policies set forth in Chapter 5 on voucher term, extension, and expiration. If a family does not locate a new unit within the term of the voucher and any extensions, the family may remain in its current unit with continued voucher assistance if the owner agrees and OHFA approves. Otherwise, the family will lose its assistance.

For families moving into or families approved to move out of OHFA's jurisdiction under portability, OHFA will follow the policies set forth in Part II of this chapter.

Housing Assistance Payments [24 CFR 982.311(d)]

When a family moves out of an assisted unit, OHFA may not make any housing assistance payment to the owner for any month **after** the month the family moves out. The owner may keep the housing assistance payment for the month when the family moves out of the unit.

If a participant family moves from an assisted unit with continued tenant-based assistance, the term of the assisted lease for the new assisted unit may begin during the month the family moves out of the first assisted unit. Overlap of the last housing assistance payment (for the month when the family moves out of the old unit) and the first assistance payment for the new unit, is not considered to constitute a duplicative housing subsidy.

Zero HAP Families Who Wish to Move [24 CFR 982.455]

A participant who is not receiving any subsidy, but whose HAP contract is still in force, may request a voucher to move to a different unit. OHFA must issue a voucher to move unless it has grounds to deny assistance under the program regulations. However, if OHFA determines no subsidy would be paid at the new unit, OHFA may refuse to enter into a HAP contract on behalf of the family.

> If a zero HAP family requests to move to a new unit, the family may request a voucher to move. However, if no subsidy will be paid at the unit to which the family requests to move, OHFA will not enter into a HAP contract on behalf of the family for the new unit.

PART II: PORTABILITY

10-II.A. OVERVIEW

Within the limitations of the regulations and this plan, a participant family or an applicant family that has been issued a voucher has the right to use tenant-based voucher assistance to lease a unit anywhere in the United States providing that the unit is located within the jurisdiction of a PHA administering a tenant-based voucher program [24 CFR 982.353(b)]. The process by which a family obtains a voucher from one PHA and uses it to lease a unit in the jurisdiction of another PHA is known as portability.

The PHA that issues the voucher is called the **initial PHA.** The PHA that has jurisdiction in the area to which the family wants to move is called the **receiving PHA.**

The receiving PHA has the option of administering the family's voucher for the initial PHA or absorbing the family into its own program. Under the first option, the receiving PHA provides all housing services for the family and bills the initial PHA for the family's housing assistance payments and the fees for administering the family's voucher. Under the second option, the receiving PHA pays for the family's assistance with its own program funds, and the initial PHA

has no further relationship with the family. The initial PHA must contact the receiving PHA via email or other confirmed delivery method to determine whether the receiving PHA will administer or absorb the initial PHA's voucher. Based on the receiving PHA's response, the initial PHA must determine whether they will approve or deny the portability request [Notice PIH 2016-09].

PHAs commonly act as both the initial and receiving PHA because families may move into or out of their jurisdiction under portability. Each role involves different responsibilities. The PHA will follow the rules and policies in section 10-II.B when it is acting as the initial PHA for a family. It will follow the rules and policies in section 10-II.C when it is acting as the receiving PHA for a family.

In administering portability, the initial PHA and the receiving PHA must comply with financial procedures required by HUD, including the use of HUD-required forms [24 CFR 982.355(e)(5)].

PHAs must also comply with billing and payment deadlines. HUD may reduce an administrative fee to an initial or receiving PHA if the PHA does not comply with HUD portability requirements [24 CFR 982.355(e)(7)].

10-II.B. INITIAL PHA ROLE

Allowable Moves under Portability

A family may move with voucher assistance only to an area where there is at least one PHA administering a voucher program [24 CFR 982.353(b)]. If there is more than one PHA in the area, the initial PHA provides the family with the contact information for the receiving PHAs that serve the area, and the family selects the receiving PHA. The family must inform the initial PHA which PHA it has selected. If the family prefers not to select the receiving PHA, the initial PHA will select the receiving PHA on behalf of the family (24 CFR 982.255(b).

Applicant families that have been issued vouchers as well as participant families may qualify to lease a unit outside OHFA's jurisdiction under portability. The initial PHA, in accordance with HUD regulations and OHFA policy, determines whether a family qualifies.

Applicant Families

Under HUD regulations, most applicant families qualify to lease a unit outside OHFA's jurisdiction under portability. However, HUD gives OHFA discretion to deny a portability move by an applicant family for the same two reasons that it may deny any move by a participant family: insufficient funding and grounds for denial or termination of assistance. If a PHA intends to deny a family permission to move under portability due to insufficient funding, the PHA must

notify HUD within 10 business days of the determination to deny the move [24 CFR 982.355(e)].

In determining whether or not to deny an applicant family permission to move under portability because OHFA lacks sufficient funding or has grounds for denying assistance to the family, the initial PHA will follow the policies established in section 10-I.B of this chapter. If the PHA does deny the move due to insufficient funding, the PHA will notify HUD in writing within 10 business days of the PHA's determination to deny the move.

In addition, OHFA may establish a policy denying the right to portability to nonresident applicants during the first 12 months after they are admitted to the program [24 CFR 982.353(c)].

If neither the head of household nor the spouse/cohead of an applicant family had a domicile (legal residence) in OHFA's jurisdiction at the time the family's application for assistance was submitted, the family must live in OHFA's jurisdiction with voucher assistance for at least 12 months before requesting portability.

OHFA will consider exceptions to this policy for purposes of reasonable accommodation (see Chapter 2) or reasons related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking.

Participant Families

The initial PHA must not provide portable assistance for a participant if a family has moved out of its assisted unit in violation of the lease [24 CFR 982.353(b)]. The Violence Against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) creates an exception to this prohibition for families who are otherwise in compliance with program obligations but have moved to protect the health or safety of a family member who is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking, and who reasonably believed they were imminently threatened by harm from further violence if they remained in the unit [24 CFR 982.353(b)].

OHFA will determine whether a participant family may move out of OHFA's jurisdiction with continued assistance in accordance with the regulations and policies set forth here and in sections 10-I.A and 10-I.B of this chapter. OHFA will notify the family of its determination in accordance with the approval policy set forth in section 10-I.C of this chapter.

Determining Income Eligibility

Applicant Families

An applicant family may lease a unit in a particular area under portability only if the family is income eligible for admission to the voucher program in that area [24 CFR 982.353(d)(1)]. The family must specify the area to which the family wishes to move [CFR 982.355(c)(1)].

The initial PHA is responsible for determining whether the family is income eligible in the area to which the family wishes to move [24 CFR 982.353(d)(1), 24 CFR 982.355(9)]. If the applicant family is not income eligible in that area, OHFA must inform the family that it may not move there and receive voucher assistance [Notice PIH 2016-09].

Participant Families

The income eligibility of a participant family is not redetermined if the family moves to a new jurisdiction under portability [24 CFR 982.353(d)(2)].

Reexamination of Family Income and Composition

No new reexamination of family income and composition is required for an applicant family.

For a participant family approved to move out of its jurisdiction under portability, OHFA generally will conduct a reexamination of family income and composition only if the family's annual reexamination must be completed on or before the initial billing deadline specified on form HUD-52665, Family Portability Information.

OHFA will make any exceptions to this policy necessary to remain in compliance with HUD regulations.

Briefing

The regulations and policies on briefings set forth in Chapter 5 of this plan require OHFA to provide information on portability to all applicant families that qualify to lease a unit outside OHFA's jurisdiction under the portability procedures. Therefore, no special briefing is required for these families.

No formal briefing will be required for a participant family wishing to move outside OHFA's jurisdiction under portability. However, OHFA will provide the family with the same oral and written explanation of portability that it provides to applicant families selected for admission to the program (see Chapter 5).

OHFA will provide the name, address, and phone of the contact for the PHAs in the jurisdiction to which they wish to move. If there is more than one PHA with jurisdiction over the area to which the family wishes to move, OHFA will advise the family that the family selects the receiving PHA and notify OHFA of which receiving PHA was

selected. OHFA will provide the family with contact information for all of the receiving PHAs that serve the area. The PHA will not provide any additional information about receiving PHAs in the area. OHFA will further inform the family that if the family prefers not to select the receiving PHA, OHFA will select the receiving PHA on behalf of the family. In this case, OHFA will not provide the family with information for all receiving PHAs in the area.

OHFA will advise the family that they will be under the receiving PHA's policies and procedures, including screening, subsidy standards, voucher extension policies, and payment standards.

Voucher Issuance and Term

An applicant family has no right to portability until after the family has been issued a voucher [24 CFR 982.353(b)]. In issuing vouchers to applicant families, OHFA will follow the regulations and procedures set forth in Chapter 5.

For families approved to move under portability, OHFA will issue a new voucher within 14 days of OHFA's written approval to move.

The initial term of the voucher will be 60 days.

Voucher Extensions and Expiration

OHFA will approve **no** extensions to a voucher issued to an applicant or participant family porting out of OHFA's jurisdiction except under the following circumstances: (a) the initial term of the voucher will expire before the portable family will be issued a voucher by the receiving PHA, (b) the family decides to return to the initial PHA's jurisdiction and search for a unit there, or (c) the family decides to search for a unit in a third PHA's jurisdiction. In such cases, the policies on voucher extensions set forth in Chapter 5, section 5-II.E, of this plan will apply, including the requirement that the family apply for an extension in writing prior to the expiration of the initial voucher term.

Preapproval Contact with the Receiving PHA

Prior to approving a family's request to move under portability, the initial PHA must contact the receiving PHA via email to determine whether the receiving PHA will administer or absorb the family's voucher. Based on the receiving PHA's response, the initial PHA must determine whether it will approve or deny the move [24 CFR 982.355(c)(3)].

OHFA will email, when possible, to contact the receiving PHA regarding whether the receiving PHA will administer or absorb the family's voucher.

Initial Notification to the Receiving PHA

After approving a family's request to move under portability, the initial PHA must promptly notify the receiving PHA via email or other confirmed delivery method to expect the family [24 CFR 982.355(c)(3), 24 CFR 982.355(c)(7)]. The initial PHA must also advise the family how to contact and request assistance from the receiving PHA [24 CFR 982.355(c)(6)].

Because the portability process is time-sensitive, OHFA will notify the receiving PHA by phone, fax, regular mail, or e-mail to expect the family. The initial PHA will also ask the receiving PHA to provide any information the family may need upon arrival, including the name, fax, email address, and telephone number of the staff person responsible for business with incoming portable families and procedures related to appointments for voucher issuance. OHFA will pass this information along to the family. OHFA will also ask for the name, address, telephone number, fax, and email of the person responsible for processing the billing information.

Sending Documentation to the Receiving PHA

The initial PHA is required to send the receiving PHA the following documents:

- Form HUD-52665, Family Portability Information, with Part I filled out [Notice PIH 2016-09]
- A copy of the family's voucher [Notice PIH 2016-09]
- A copy of the family's most recent form HUD-50058, Family Report, or, if necessary in the case of an applicant family, family and income information in a format similar to that of form HUD-50058 [24 CFR 982.355(c)(7), Notice PIH 2016-09]
- Copies of the income verifications backing up the form HUD-50058, including a copy of the family's current EIV data [24 CFR 982.355(c)(7), Notice PIH 2016-09]

In addition to these documents, OHFA will provide the following information, if available, to the receiving PHA:

Social security numbers (SSNs)

Documentation of SSNs for all nonexempt household members whose SSNs have not been verified through the EIV system

Documentation of legal identity

Documentation of citizenship or eligible immigration status

Documentation of participation in the earned income disallowance (EID) benefit

Documentation of participation in a family self-sufficiency (FSS) program

If applicable, information related to the family's health and medical care and disability assistance expense phased-in hardship exemption, including what stage the family is in and how many months remain in that phase-in stage

OHFA will notify the family in writing regarding any information provided to the receiving PHA [HCV GB, p. 13-3].

Initial Billing Deadline [Notice PIH 2016-09]

The deadline for submission of initial billing is 90 days following the expiration date of the voucher issued to the family by the initial PHA. In cases where suspension of the voucher delays the initial billing submission, the receiving PHA must notify the initial PHA of delayed billing before the billing deadline and document the delay is due to the suspension. In this case, the initial PHA must extend the billing deadline by 30 days.

If the initial PHA does not receive a billing notice by the deadline and does not intend to honor a late billing submission, it must notify the initial PHA in writing. The initial PHA may report to HUD the receiving PHA's failure to comply with the deadline. If the initial PHA will honor the late billing, no action is required.

OHFA's decision as to whether to accept late billing will be based on internal OHFA factors, including OHFA's leasing or funding status. If OHFA has not received an initial billing notice from the receiving PHA within the billing deadline and does not intend to honor the late billing, it will contact the receiving PHA to inform them that it will not honor a late billing submission and will return any subsequent billings that it receives on behalf of the family. In this case, OHFA will send the receiving PHA a written confirmation of its decision by mail.

Among other considerations as to whether to accept late billing will be if the family includes a person with disabilities and the late billing is a result of a reasonable accommodation granted to the family by the receiving PHA.

Monthly Billing Payments [24 CFR 982.355(e), Notice PIH 2016-09]

If the receiving PHA is administering the family's voucher, the receiving PHA bills the initial PHA for housing assistance payments and administrative fees. When reimbursing for administrative fees, the initial PHA must promptly reimburse the receiving PHA for the lesser of 80 percent of the initial PHA ongoing administrative fee or 100 percent of the receiving PHA's ongoing administrative fee for each program unit under contract on the first day of the month for which the receiving PHA is billing the initial PHA under portability. If the administrative fees are prorated for the HCV program, the proration will apply to the amount of the administrative fee for which the receiving PHA may bill [24 CFR 982.355(e)(2)].

The initial PHA is responsible for making billing payments in a timely manner. The first billing amount is due within 30 calendar days after the initial PHA receives Part II of form HUD-52665 from the receiving PHA. Subsequent payments must be **received** by the receiving PHA no later than the fifth business day of each month. The payments must be provided in a form and manner that the receiving PHA is able and willing to accept.

The initial PHA may not terminate or delay making payments under existing portability billing arrangements as a result of overleasing or funding shortfalls. OHFA must manage its tenant-based program in a manner that ensures that it has the financial ability to provide assistance for families that move out of its jurisdiction under portability and are not absorbed by receiving PHAs as well as for families that remain within its jurisdiction.

> The initial PHA will utilize direct deposit to ensure that the payment is received by the deadline unless the receiving PHA notifies the initial PHA that direct deposit is not acceptable to them. If the initial PHA extends the term of the voucher, the receiving PHA's voucher will expire 30 calendar days from the new expiration date of the initial PHA's voucher.

Annual Updates of Form HUD-50058

If the initial PHA is being billed on behalf of a portable family, it should receive an updated form HUD-50058 each year from the receiving PHA. If the initial PHA fails to receive an updated 50058 by the family's annual reexamination date, the initial PHA should contact the receiving PHA to verify the status of the family. The initial PHA must continue paying the receiving PHA based on the last form HUD-50058 received, unless instructed otherwise by HUD. The initial PHA may seek absorption of the vouchers by following steps outlined in Notice PIH 2016-09.

Denial or Termination of Assistance [24 CFR 982.355(c)(9)]

At any time, either the initial PHA or the receiving PHA may make a determination to deny or terminate assistance with the family in accordance with 24 CFR 982.552 and 24 CFR 982.553. (For OHFA's policies on denial and termination, see Chapters 3 and 12, respectively.)

10-II.C. RECEIVING PHA ROLE

If a family has a right to lease a unit in the receiving PHA's jurisdiction under portability, the receiving PHA must provide assistance for the family [24 CFR 982.355(10)]. HUD may determine in certain instances that a PHA is not required to accept incoming portable families, such as a PHA in a declared disaster area. However, the PHA must have approval in writing from HUD before refusing any incoming portable families [24 CFR 982.355(b)].

Administration of the voucher must be in accordance with the receiving PHA's policies. This requirement also applies to policies of Moving to Work agencies. The receiving PHA procedures and preferences for selection among eligible applicants do not apply to the family, and the receiving PHA waiting list is not used [24 CFR 982.355(c)(10)]. The family's unit, or voucher, size is determined in accordance with the subsidy standards of the receiving PHA [24 CFR 982.355(c)(12)], and the PHA's policies on extensions of the voucher term apply [24 CFR 982.355(c)(14)].

Responding to Initial PHA's Request [24 CFR 982.355(c)]

The receiving PHA must respond to the initial PHA's inquiry to determine whether the family's voucher will be billed or absorbed [24 CFR 982.355(c)(3)]. If the receiving PHA informs the initial PHA that it will be absorbing the voucher, the receiving PHA cannot reverse its decision at a later date without consent of the initial PHA [24 CFR 982.355(c)(4)].

> OHFA will will use email, when possible, to notify the initial PHA whether it will administer or absorb the family's voucher **Initial Contact with Family**

When a family moves into OHFA's jurisdiction under portability, the family is responsible for promptly contacting OHFA and complying with OHFA's procedures for incoming portable families. The family's failure to comply may result in denial or termination of the receiving OHFA's voucher [24 CFR 982.355(c)(8)].

If the voucher issued to the family by the initial PHA has expired, the receiving PHA must contact the initial PHA to determine if it will extend the voucher [24 CFR 982.355(c)(13)]. An informal hearing is not required when a voucher has expired without the family leasing a unit.

If for any reason the receiving PHA refuses to process or provide assistance to a family under the portability procedures, the family must be given the opportunity for an informal review or hearing [Notice PIH 2016-09]. (For more on this topic, see later under "Denial or Termination of Assistance.")

Briefing

HUD allows the receiving PHA to require a briefing for an incoming portable family as long as the requirement does not unduly delay the family's search [Notice PIH 2016-09].

> OHFA will not require the family to attend a briefing. OHFA will provide the family with a briefing packet (as described in Chapter 5) and, in an individual briefing, will orally inform the family about OHFA payment and subsidy standards, procedures for requesting approval of a unit, the unit inspection process, and the leasing process. OHFA will suggest that the family attend a full briefing at a later date.

Income Eligibility and Reexamination

The receiving PHA does not redetermine eligibility for a portable family that was already receiving assistance in the initial PHA's voucher program [24 CFR 982.355(c)(9)]. If the receiving PHA opts to conduct a new reexamination for a current participant family, the receiving PHA may not delay issuing the family a voucher or otherwise delay approval of a unit [24 CFR 982.355(c)(11)].

For any family moving into its jurisdiction under portability, OHFA will conduct a new reexamination of family income and composition. However, OHFA will not delay issuing the family a voucher for this reason. Nor will OHFA delay approving a unit for the family until the reexamination process is complete unless the family is an applicant and OHFA cannot otherwise confirm that the family is income eligible for admission to the program in the area where the unit is located.

In conducting its own reexamination, OHFA will rely upon any verifications provided by the initial PHA to the extent that they (a) accurately reflect the family's current circumstances and (b) were obtained within the last 120 days. Any new information may be verified by documents provided by the family and adjusted, if necessary, when third party verification is received.

Voucher Issuance

When a family moves into its jurisdiction under portability, the receiving PHA is required to issue the family a voucher [24 CFR 982.355(c)(13)]. The family must submit a request for tenancy approval to the receiving PHA during the term of the receiving PHA's voucher [24 CFR 982.355(c)(15)].

Timing of Voucher Issuance

HUD expects the receiving PHA to issue the voucher within two weeks after receiving the family's paperwork from the initial PHA if the information is in order, the family has contacted the receiving PHA, and the family complies with the receiving PHA's procedures [Notice PIH 2016-09].

When a family ports into its jurisdiction, OHFA will issue the family a voucher based on the paperwork provided by the initial PHA unless the family's paperwork from the initial PHA is incomplete, the family's voucher from the initial PHA has expired, or the family does not comply with OHFA's procedures. OHFA will update the family's information when verification has been completed.

Voucher Term

The term of the receiving PHA's voucher may not expire before 30 calendar days from the expiration of the initial PHA's voucher [24 CFR 982.355(c)(13)]. If the initial PHA extends the term of the voucher, the receiving PHA's voucher may not expire before 30 days from the new expiration date of the initial PHA's voucher [Notice PIH 2016-09].

The receiving PHA's voucher will expire 30 calendars days from the expiration date of the initial PHA's voucher. If the initial PHA extends the term of the voucher, the receiving PHA's voucher will expire 30 calendar days from the new expiration date of the initial PHA's voucher.

Voucher Extensions [24 CFR 982.355(c)(6), Notice 2016-09]

Once the receiving PHA issues the portable family a voucher, the receiving PHA's policies on extensions of the voucher term apply. The receiving PHA must inform the initial PHA of any extension granted to the term of the voucher. It must also bear in mind the billing deadline provided by the initial PHA. Unless willing and able to absorb the family, the receiving PHA should ensure that any voucher expiration date would leave sufficient time to process a request for tenancy approval, execute a HAP contract, and deliver the initial billing to the initial PHA.

OHFA generally will not extend the term of the voucher that it issues to an incoming portable family unless OHFA plans to absorb the family into its own program, in which case it will follow the policies on voucher extension set forth in section 5-II.E.

OHFA will consider an exception to this policy as a reasonable accommodation to a person with disabilities (see Chapter 2).

Voucher Suspensions [24 CFR 982.303, 24 CFR 982.355(c)(15)]

If the family submits a request for tenancy approval during the term of the receiving PHA's voucher, the PHA must suspend the term of that voucher. The term of the voucher stops from the date that the family submits a request for PHA approval of the tenancy until the date the PHA notifies the family in writing whether the request has been approved or denied [24 CFR 982.4(b)] (see Section 5-II.E).

Notifying the Initial PHA

The receiving PHA must promptly notify the initial PHA if the family has leased an eligible unit under the program or if the family fails to submit a request for tenancy approval for an eligible unit within the term of the receiving PHA's voucher [24 CFR 982.355(c)(16)]. The receiving PHA is required to use Part II of form HUD-52665, Family Portability Information, for this purpose [Notice PIH 2016-09]. (For more on this topic and the deadline for notification, see below under "Administering a Portable Family's Voucher.")

If an incoming portable family ultimately decides not to lease in the jurisdiction of the receiving PHA but instead wishes to return to the initial PHA's jurisdiction or to search in another jurisdiction, the receiving PHA must refer the family back to the initial PHA. In such a case, the voucher of record for the family is once again the voucher originally issued by the initial PHA. Any extension of search time provided by the receiving PHA's voucher is only valid for the family's search in the receiving PHA's jurisdiction [Notice PIH 2016-09].

Administering a Portable Family's Voucher

Portability Billing [24 CFR 982.355(e)]

To cover assistance for a portable family that was not absorbed, the receiving PHA bills the initial PHA for housing assistance payments and administrative fees. The amount of the housing assistance payment for a portable family in the receiving PHA's program is determined in the same manner as for other families in the receiving PHA's program.

The receiving PHA may bill the initial PHA for the lesser of 80 percent of the initial PHA's ongoing administrative fee or 100 percent of the receiving PHA's ongoing administrative fee for each program unit under contract on the first day of the month for which the receiving PHA is billing the initial PHA under portability. If the administrative fees are prorated for the HCV program, the proration will apply to the amount of the administrative fee for which the receiving PHA may bill (i.e., the receiving PHA may bill for the lesser of 80 percent of the initial PHA's prorated ongoing administrative fee or 100 percent of the receiving PHA's ongoing administrative fee).If both PHAs agree, the PHAs may negotiate a different amount of reimbursement. Unless the PHA negotiates a different amount of reimbursement with the initial PHA, the PHA will bill the initial PHA the maximum amount of administrative fees allowed, ensuring any administrative fee proration has been properly applied.

Initial Billing Deadline

If a portable family's search for a unit is successful and the receiving PHA intends to administer the family's voucher, the receiving PHA must submit its initial billing notice (Part II of form HUD-52665) in time that the notice will be **received** no later than 90 days following the expiration date of the family's voucher issued by the initial PHA [Notice PIH 2016-09]. This deadline may be extended for 30 additional days if the delay is due to suspension of the voucher's term (see Initial Billing Section). A copy of the family's form HUD-50058, Family Report, completed by the receiving PHA must be attached to the initial billing notice. The receiving PHA may send these documents by mail, fax, or e-mail.

> OHFA will send its initial billing notice by fax or e-mail, if necessary, to meet the billing deadline but may also send the notice by regular mail.

If the receiving PHA fails to send the initial billing by the deadline, it is required to absorb the family into its own program unless (a) the initial PHA is willing to accept the late submission or (b) HUD requires the initial PHA to honor the late submission (e.g., because the receiving PHA is over leased) [Notice PIH 2016-09].

Ongoing Notification Responsibilities [Notice PIH 2016-09, HUD-52665]

Annual Reexamination. The receiving PHA must send the initial PHA a copy of a portable family's updated form HUD-50058 after each annual reexamination for the duration of time the receiving PHA is billing the initial PHA on behalf of the family, regardless of whether there is a change in the billing amount.

> OHFA will send a copy of the updated HUD-50058 by regular mail no later than 10 business days after the effective date of the reexamination.

Change in Billing Amount. The receiving PHA is required to notify the initial PHA, using form HUD-52665, of any change in the billing amount for the family as a result of:

- A change in the HAP amount (because of a reexamination, a change in the applicable payment standard, a move to another unit, etc.)
- An abatement or subsequent resumption of the HAP payments
- Termination of the HAP contract
- Payment of a damage/vacancy loss claim for the family
- Termination of the family from the program

The timing of the notice of the change in the billing amount should correspond with the notification to the owner and the family in order to provide the initial PHA with advance notice of the change. Under no circumstances should the notification be later than 10 business days following the effective date of the change in the billing amount. If the receiving PHA fails to send Form HUD-52665 within 10 days of effective date of billing changes, the initial PHA is not responsible for any increase prior to notification. If the change resulted in a decrease in the monthly billing amount, the initial PHA will offset future monthly payments until the difference is reconciled.

Late Payments [Notice PIH 2016-09]

If the initial PHA fails to make a monthly payment for a portable family by the fifth business day of the month, the receiving PHA must promptly notify the initial PHA in writing of the deficiency. The notice must identify the family, the amount of the billing payment, the date the billing payment was due, and the date the billing payment was received (if it arrived late). The receiving PHA must send a copy of the notification to the Office of Public Housing (OPH) in the

HUD area office with jurisdiction over the receiving PHA. If the initial PHA fails to correct the problem by the second month following the notification, the receiving PHA may request by memorandum to the director of the OPH with jurisdiction over the receiving PHA that HUD transfer the unit in question. A copy of the initial notification and any subsequent correspondence between the PHAs on the matter must be attached. The receiving PHA must send a copy of the memorandum to the initial PHA. If the OPH decides to grant the transfer, the billing arrangement on behalf of the family ceases with the transfer, but the initial PHA is still responsible for any outstanding payments due to the receiving PHA.

Overpayments [Notice PIH 2016-09]

In all cases where the receiving PHA has received billing payments for billing arrangements no longer in effect, the receiving PHA is responsible for returning the full amount of the overpayment (including the portion provided for administrative fees) to the initial PHA.

In the event that HUD determines billing payments have continued for at least three months because the receiving PHA failed to notify the initial PHA that the billing arrangement was terminated, the receiving PHA must take the following steps:

- Return the full amount of the overpayment, including the portion provided for administrative fees, to the initial PHA.
- Once full payment has been returned, notify the Office of Public Housing in the HUD area office with jurisdiction over the receiving PHA of the date and the amount of reimbursement to the initial PHA.

At HUD's discretion, the receiving PHA will be subject to the sanctions spelled out in Notice PIH 2016-09.

Denial or Termination of Assistance

At any time, the receiving PHA may make a determination to deny or terminate assistance to a portable family for family action or inaction [24 CFR 982.355(c)(17)].

In the case of a termination, OHFA should provide adequate notice of the effective date to the initial PHA to avoid having to return a payment. In no event should the receiving PHA fail to notify the initial PHA later than 10 business days following the effective date of the termination of the billing arrangement [HUD-52665, Notice PIH 2016-09].

> If OHFA elects to deny or terminate assistance for a portable family, OHFA will notify the initial PHA within 10 business days after the informal review or hearing if the denial or termination is upheld. OHFA will base its denial or termination decision on the

policies set forth in Chapter 3 or Chapter 12, respectively. The informal review or hearing will be held in accordance with the policies in Chapter 16. The receiving PHA will furnish the initial PHA with a copy of the review or hearing decision.

Absorbing a Portable Family

The receiving PHA may absorb an incoming portable family into its own program when OHFA executes a HAP contract on behalf of the family or at any time thereafter providing that OHFA has funding available under its annual contributions contract (ACC) [24 CFR 982.355(d)(1), Notice PIH 2016-09].

If the receiving PHA absorbs a family from the point of admission, the admission will be counted against the income targeting obligation of the receiving PHA [24 CFR 982.201(b)(2)(vii)].

If the receiving PHA absorbs a family after providing assistance for the family under a billing arrangement with the initial PHA, the receiving PHA must send an updated form HUD-52665 to the initial PHA no later than 10 business days following the effective date of the termination of the billing arrangement. [Notice PIH 2016-09].

If OHFA decides to absorb a portable family upon the execution of a HAP contract on behalf of the family, OHFA will notify the initial PHA by the initial billing deadline specified on form HUD-52665. The effective date of the HAP contract will be the effective date of the absorption.

If OHFA decides to absorb a family after that, it will provide the initial PHA with advance notice, but no later than 10 business days following the effective date of the termination of the billing arrangement.

Following the absorption of an incoming portable family, the family is assisted with funds available under the consolidated ACC for the receiving PHA's voucher program [24 CFR 982.355(d)], and the receiving PHA becomes the initial PHA in any subsequent moves by the family under portability [24 CFR 982.355(e)(4)].

RESERVED

Chapter 11

REEXAMINATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) is required to reexamine each family's income and composition at least annually, and to adjust the family's level of assistance accordingly. Interim reexaminations are also needed in certain situations. This chapter discusses both annual and interim reexaminations, and the recalculation of family share and subsidy that occurs as a result. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations and OHFA policies concerning reexaminations are presented in three parts:

Part I: Annual Reexaminations. This part discusses the process for conducting annual reexaminations.

Part II: Interim Reexaminations. This part details the requirements for families to report changes in family income and composition between annual reexaminations.

Part III: Recalculating Family Share and Subsidy Amount. This part discusses the recalculation of family share and subsidy amounts based on the results of annual and interim reexaminations.

Policies governing reasonable accommodation, family privacy, required family cooperation, and program abuse, as described elsewhere in this plan, apply to both annual and interim reexaminations.

PART I: ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS [24 CFR 982.516]

11-I.A. OVERVIEW

OHFA must conduct a reexamination of family income and composition at least annually. This includes gathering and verifying current information about family composition, income, and expenses. Based on this updated information, the family's income and rent must be recalculated. This part discusses the schedule for annual reexaminations, the information to be collected and verified, and annual reexamination effective dates.

11-I.B STREAMLINED ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS [24 CFR 982.516(b)]

HUD permits PHAs to streamline the income determination process for family members with fixed sources of income. While third-party verification of all income sources must be obtained during the intake process and every three years thereafter, in the intervening years the PHA may determine income from fixed sources by applying a verified cost of living adjustment (COLA) or rate of interest. However, OHFA may obtain third-party verification of all income, regardless of the source. Further, upon request of the family, OHFA must perform third-party verification of all income sources.

Fixed sources of income include Social Security and SSI benefits, pensions, annuities, disability or death benefits, and other sources of income subject to a COLA or rate of interest. The determination of fixed income may be streamlined even if the family also receives income from other non-fixed sources.

> OHFA will continue to obtain third-party verification of fixed sources of income annually.

11-I.C. SCHEDULING ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS

OHFA must establish a policy to ensure that the annual reexamination for each family is completed *within* a 12-month period, and may require reexaminations more frequently [HCV GB p. 12-1].

> OHFA will begin the annual reexamination process 120 days in advance of its scheduled effective date. Generally, OHFA will schedule annual reexamination effective dates to coincide with the family's anniversary date.
>
> *Anniversary date* is defined as 12 months from the effective date of the family's last annual reexamination or, during a family's first year in the program, from the effective date of the family's initial examination (admission).
>
> OHFA also may schedule an annual reexamination for completion prior to the anniversary date for administrative purposes.

Notification of and Participation in the Annual Reexamination Process

OHFA is required to obtain the information needed to conduct annual reexaminations. How that information will be collected is left to the discretion of OHFA. However, OHFA should give tenants who were not provided the opportunity the option to complete Form HUD-92006 at this time [Notice PIH 2009-36].

Families are required to complete an annual reexamination, which must be completed by the head of household, spouse, or cohead and all adults, which includes anyone who will be 18 years of age on or before the annual reexamination effective date.

Annual reexamination packets will be sent by first-class mail and will contain the date in which the packet must be returned to OHFA. In addition, it will inform the family of the information and documentation that must be returned with the reexamination packet.

If a family fails to return the reexamination packet after two mail attempts, or if the notice is returned by the post office with no forwarding address, a notice of termination (see Chapter 12) will be sent to the family's address of record, and to any alternate address provided in the family's file.

An advocate, interpreter, or other assistant may assist the family recertification process.

11-I.D. CONDUCTING ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS

As part of the annual reexamination process, families are required to provide updated information to OHFA regarding the family's income, expenses, and composition [24 CFR 982.551(b)].

Families will be asked to return all required information (as described in the reexamination notice) with the reexamination packet. The required information will include an OHFA-designated reexamination form, an Authorization for the Release of Information/Privacy Act Notice, as well as supporting documentation related to the family's income, expenses, and family composition.

Any required documents or information that the family is unable to provide at time must be provided within 14 days of the discrepency sent by OHFA. If the family is unable to obtain the information or materials within the required time frame, the family may request an extension.

If the family does not provide the required documents or information within the required time frame (plus any extensions), the family will be sent a notice of termination (See Chapter 12).

Additionally, HUD recommends that at annual reexaminations PHAs ask whether the tenant, or any member of the tenant's household, is subject to a lifetime sex offender registration requirement in any state [Notice PIH 2012-28].

> At the annual reexamination, OHFA will ask whether the tenant, or any member of the tenant's household, is subject to a lifetime sex offender registration requirement in any state. OHFA uses the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender database to verify the information provided by the tenant.

If OHFA proposes to terminate assistance based on lifetime sex offender registration information, OHFA must notify the household of the proposed action and must provide the subject of the record and the tenant a copy of the record and an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information prior to termination. [24 CFR 5.903(f) and 5.905(d)]. (See Chapter 12.)

The information provided by the family generally must be verified in accordance with the policies in Chapter 7. Unless the family reports a change, or the agency has reason to believe a change has occurred in information previously reported by the family, certain types of information that are verified at admission typically do not need to be re-verified on an annual basis. These include:

- Legal identity
- Age
- Social security numbers
- A person's disability status
- Citizenship or immigration status

If adding a new family member to the unit causes overcrowding according to the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) (see Chapter 8), OHFA must issue the family a new voucher, and the family and OHFA must try to find an acceptable unit as soon as possible. If an acceptable unit is available for rental by the family, OHFA must terminate the HAP contract in accordance with its terms [24 CFR 982.403].

11-I.E. DETERMINING ONGOING ELIGIBILITY OF CERTAIN STUDENTS [24 CFR 982.552(b)(5)]

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

If a student enrolled in an institution of higher education is under the age of 24, is not a veteran, is not married, does not have a dependent child, and is not a person with disabilities receiving

HCV assistance as of November 30, 2005, the student's eligibility must be reexamined along with the income eligibility of the student's parents on an annual basis. In these cases, both the student and the student's parents must be income eligible for the student to continue to receive HCV assistance. If, however, a student in these circumstances is determined independent from their parents or is considered a vulnerable youth in accordance with OHFA policy, the income of the student's parents will not be considered in determining the student's ongoing eligibility.

Students who reside with parents in an HCV assisted unit are not subject to this provision. It is limited to students who are receiving assistance on their own, separately from their parents.

During the annual reexamination process, OHFA will determine the ongoing eligibility of each student who is subject to the eligibility restrictions in 24 CFR 5.612 by reviewing the student's individual income as well as the income of the student's parents. If the student has been determined "independent" from their parents or is considered a vulnerable youth based on the policies in Sections 3-II.E and 7-II.E, the parents' income will not be reviewed.

If the student is no longer income eligible based on their own income or the income of his/her parents, the student's assistance will be terminated in accordance with the policies in Section 12-I.D.

If the student continues to be income eligible based on their own income and the income of his/her parents (if applicable), OHFA will process a reexamination in accordance with the policies in this chapter.

11-I.F. EFFECTIVE DATES

OHFA must establish policies concerning the effective date of changes that result from an annual reexamination [24 CFR 982.516].

In general, an *increase* in the family share of the rent that results from an annual reexamination will take effect on the family's anniversary date, and the family will be notified at least 30 days in advance.

If less than 30 days remain before the scheduled effective date, the increase will take effect on the first of the month following the end of the 30-day notice period.

If a family moves to a new unit, the increase will take effect on the effective date of the new lease and HAP contract, and no 30-day notice is required.

If OHFA chooses to schedule an annual reexamination for completion prior to the family's anniversary date for administrative purposes, the effective date will be determined by OHFA, but will always allow for the 30-day notice period.

If the family causes a delay in processing the annual reexamination, *increases* in the family share of the rent will be applied retroactively, to the scheduled effective date of the annual reexamination. The family will be responsible for any overpaid subsidy and may be offered a repayment agreement in accordance with the policies in Chapter 16.

In general, a *decrease* in the family share of the rent that results from an annual reexamination will take effect on the family's anniversary date.

If a family moves to a new unit, the decrease will take effect on the effective date of the new lease and HAP contract.

If OHFA chooses to schedule an annual reexamination for completion prior to the family's anniversary date for administrative purposes, the effective date will be determined by OHFA.

If the family causes a delay in processing the annual reexamination, d*ecreases* in the family share of the rent will be applied prospectively, from the first day of the month following completion of the reexamination processing.

Delays in reexamination processing are considered to be caused by the family if the family fails to provide information requested by OHFA by the date specified, and this delay prevents OHFA from completing the reexamination as scheduled.

PART II: INTERIM REEXAMINATIONS [24 CFR 982.516]

11-II.A. OVERVIEW

Family circumstances may change throughout the period between annual reexaminations. HUD and OHFA policies dictate what kinds of information about changes in family circumstances must be reported, and under what circumstances OHFA must process interim reexaminations to reflect those changes. HUD regulations also permit OHFA to conduct interim reexaminations of income or family composition at any time. When an interim reexamination is conducted, only those factors that have changed are verified and adjusted [HCV GB, p. 12-10].

In addition to specifying what information the family must report, HUD regulations permit the family to request an interim determination if other aspects of the family's income or composition changes. OHFA must complete the interim reexamination within a reasonable time after the family's request.

This part includes HUD and OHFA policies describing what changes families are required to report, what changes families may choose to report, and how OHFA will process both OHFA and family-initiated interim reexaminations.

11-II.B. CHANGES IN FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

The family is required to report all changes in family composition. OHFA must adopt policies prescribing when and under what conditions the family must report changes in family composition. However, due to family obligations under the program, OHFA has limited discretion in this area.

> OHFA will conduct interim reexaminations to account for any changes in household composition that occur between annual reexaminations.

New Family Members Not Requiring Approval

The addition of a family member as a result of birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody does not require OHFA approval. However, the family is required to promptly notify OHFA of the addition [24 CFR 982.551(h)(2)].

> The family must inform OHFA of any household composition change within 30 calendar days.

New Family and Household Members Requiring Approval

With the exception of children who join the family as a result of birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody, a family must request OHFA approval to add a new family member [24 CFR 982.551(h)(2)] or other household member (live-in aide or foster child) [24 CFR 982.551(h)(4)].

When any new family member is added, OHFA must make appropriate adjustments in the family share of the rent and the HAP payment at the effective date of either the annual or interim reexamination [24 CFR 982.516(e)(2)].

If a change in family size causes a violation of Housing Quality Standards (HQS) space standards (see Chapter 8), OHFA must issue the family a new voucher, and the family and OHFA must try to find an acceptable unit as soon as possible. If an acceptable unit is available for rental by the family, OHFA must terminate the family's HAP contract in accordance with its terms [24 CFR 982.403].

Families must request OHFA approval to add a new family member, live-in aide, foster child, or foster adult. This includes any person not on the lease who is expected to stay in the unit for more than 30 consecutive days. Requests must be made in writing and approved by OHFA prior to the individual moving into the unit.

OHFA will not approve the addition of a new family or household member unless the individual meets OHFA's eligibility criteria (see Chapter 3) and documentation requirements (see Chapter 7, Part II).

OHFA will not approve the addition of a foster child or foster adult if it will cause a violation of HQS space standards.

If OHFA determines an individual meets OHFA's eligibility criteria and documentation requirements, OHFA will provide written approval to the family. If the approval of a new family member or live-in aide will cause overcrowding according to HQS standards, the approval letter will explain that the family will be issued a voucher and will be required to move.

If OHFA determines that an individual does not meet OHFA's eligibility criteria or documentation requirements, OHFA will notify the family in writing of its decision to deny approval of the new family or household member and the reasons for the denial.

Departure of a Family or Household Member

Families must promptly notify OHFA if any family member no longer lives in the unit [24 CFR 982.551(h)(3)]. Because household members are considered when determining the family unit (voucher) size [24 CFR 982.402], OHFA also needs to know when any live-in aide, foster child, or foster adult ceases to reside in the unit.

If a household member ceases to reside in the unit, the family must inform OHFA within 30 calendar days. This requirement also applies to a family member who has been considered temporarily absent at the point that the family concludes the individual is permanently absent.

If a live-in aide, foster child, or foster adult ceases to reside in the unit, the family must inform OHFA within 30 calendar days.

11-II.C. CHANGES AFFECTING INCOME OR EXPENSES

Interim reexaminations can be scheduled either because OHFA has reason to believe that changes in income or expenses may have occurred, or because the family reports a change. When a family reports a change, OHFA may take different actions depending on whether the family reported the change voluntarily, or because it was required to do so.

OHFA-Initiated Interim Reexaminations

OHFA-initiated interim reexaminations are those that are scheduled based on circumstances or criteria defined by OHFA. They are not scheduled because of changes reported by the family.

OHFA may conduct interim reexaminations in each of the following instances:

For families receiving the Earned Income Disallowance (EID), OHFA may conduct an interim reexamination at the start and conclusion of the 24-month eligibility period.

If at the time of the annual reexamination, tenant-provided documents were used on a provisional basis due to the lack of third-party verification, and third-party verification becomes available, OHFA may conduct an interim reexamination.

OHFA may conduct an interim reexamination at any time in order to correct an error in a previous reexamination, or to investigate a tenant fraud complaint.

Family-Initiated Interim Reexaminations

OHFA must adopt policies prescribing when and under what conditions the family must report changes in family income or expenses [24 CFR 982.516(d)]. In addition, HUD regulations require that the family be permitted to obtain an interim reexamination any time the family has experienced a change in circumstances since the last determination [24 CFR 982.516(c)(2)].

Required Reporting

HUD regulations give OHFA the freedom to determine the circumstances under which families will be required to report changes affecting income.

> Families are not required to report increases in income, including new employment, and/or increases in assets between annual reexaminations unless the increase is the result of a family composition change. These changes must be reported within 30 calendar days.
>
> OHFA will conduct interim reexaminations for families that qualify for the earned income disallowance (EID), and only when the EID family's share of rent will change as a result of the increase. In other cases depending on the circumstances, OHFA will note the information in the tenant file, but may not conduct an interim reexamination.
>
> Families are not required to report any other changes in income or expenses.
>
> If a household member ceases to reside in the unit, OHFA may require an interim reexamination. The family must notify OHFA in writing within 30 days, if any family member no longer lives in the unit.
>
> If a minor is removed from the household and they had no income, OHFA will conduct an interim reexamination for the family composition only. If the voucher size is affected, OHFA will not decrease the voucher size until the next annual reexamination or voucher issuance.

If an adult is removed from the household and they were the only source of income and there is a remaining adult family member, OHFA will require the family to complete an expense worksheet and provide supporting documentation of how the family will meet their personal living expenses and process an interim reexamination.

Optional Reporting

The family may request an interim reexamination any time the family has experienced a change in circumstances since the last determination [24 CFR 982.516(c)(2)]. OHFA must process the request if the family reports a change that will result in a reduced family income [HCV GB, p. 12-9].

If a family reports a decrease in income from the loss of welfare benefits due to fraud or non-compliance with a welfare agency requirement to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program, the family's share of the rent will not be reduced [24 CFR 5.615]. For more information regarding the requirement to impute welfare income, see Chapter 6.

If a family reports a change that it was not required to report and that would result in an increase in the family share of the rent, OHFA will note the information in the tenant file, but will not conduct an interim reexamination.

If a family reports a change that it was not required to report and that would result in a decrease in the family share of rent, OHFA will conduct an interim reexamination. See Section 11-II.D. for effective dates.

Families may report changes in income or expenses at any time.

11-II.D. PROCESSING THE INTERIM REEXAMINATION

Method of Reporting

The family must notify OHFA of changes in writing.

Generally, the family will not be required to attend an interview for an interim reexamination. However, if OHFA determines that an interview is warranted, the family may be required to attend.

Based on the type of change reported, OHFA will determine the documentation the family will be required to submit. The family must submit any required information or documents within 14 days of the request from OHFA. This time frame may be extended for good cause with OHFA approval. OHFA will accept required documentation by mail, by fax, electronically, or in person.

Effective Dates

OHFA must establish the time frames in which any changes that result from an interim reexamination will take effect [24 CFR 982.516(e)]. The changes may be applied either retroactively or prospectively, depending on whether there is to be an increase or a decrease in the family share of the rent, and whether the family reported any required information within the required time frames [HCV GB, p. 12-10].

If the family share of the rent is to *increase*:

The increase generally will be effective on the first of the month following 30 days' notice to the family.

If a family fails to report a change within the required time frames, or fails to provide all required information within the required time frames, the increase will be applied

retroactively, to the date it would have been effective had the information been provided on a timely basis. The family will be responsible for any overpaid subsidy and may be offered a repayment agreement in accordance with the policies in Chapter 16.

If the family share of the rent is to *decrease*:

Decreases in the tenant rent are effective the first of the month following the month in which the change is verified.

The change will not be made until third-party verification is received.

For Coronavirus (COVID-19) affected families, OHFA may make the effective date of an interim reexamination retroactive to the first of the month following when the change is reported and/or verified.

PART III: RECALCULATING FAMILY SHARE AND SUBSIDY AMOUNT

11-III.A. OVERVIEW

After gathering and verifying required information for an annual or interim reexamination, OHFA must recalculate the family share of the rent and the subsidy amount, and notify the family and owner of the changes [24 CFR 982.516(e)(2), HCV 12-6 and 12-10]. While the basic policies that govern these calculations are provided in Chapter 6, this part lays out policies that affect these calculations during a reexamination.

11-III.B. CHANGES IN PAYMENT STANDARDS AND UTILITY ALLOWANCES

In order to calculate the family share of the rent and HAP amount correctly, changes in payment standards, subsidy standards, or utility allowances may need to be updated and included in OHFA's calculations.

Specific policies governing how subsidy standards, payment standards, and utility allowances are applied are discussed below.

Payment Standards [24 CFR 982.505]

The family share of the rent and HAP calculations must use the correct payment standard for the family, taking into consideration the family unit size, the size of unit, and the area in which the unit is located [HCV GB, p. 12-5]. See Chapter 6 for information on how to select the appropriate payment standard.

When OHFA changes its payment standards or the family's situation changes, new payment standards are applied at the following times:

- If OHFA's payment standard amount changes during the term of the HAP contract, the date on which the new standard is applied depends on whether the standard has increased or decreased:

  - If the payment standard amount has i*ncreased,* the increased payment standard will be applied at the *first annual* reexamination following the effective date of the increase in the payment standard.

  - If the payment standard amount has *decreased*, during the term of a HAP contract, OHFA is not required to reduce the payment standard as the HAP contract remains in effect. At the family's *second annual* reexamination, OHFA may, but is not required to, apply the decreased payment standard or may gradually implement the reduced payment standard (See Chapter 6 for OHFA's policy on decreases in the payment standard).

- If the family moves to a new unit, or a new HAP contract is executed due to changes in the lease (even if the family remains in place) the current payment standard applicable to the family will be used when the new HAP contract is processed.

Subsidy Standards [24 CFR 982.505(c)(4)]

If there is a change in the family unit size that would apply to a family during the HAP contract term, either due to a change in family composition, or a change in OHFA's subsidy standards (see Chapter 5), the new family unit size must be used to determine the payment standard amount for the family at the family's *first annual* reexamination following the change in family unit size. The payment standard is limited to the lower of:

The payment standard amount for the family voucher size; or

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

Utility Allowances [24 CFR 982.517(d)]

The family share of the rent and HAP calculations must reflect any changes in the family's utility arrangement with the owner, or in OHFA's utility allowance schedule [HCV GB, p. 12-5]. Chapter 16 discusses how utility allowance schedules are established.

When there are changes in the utility arrangement with the owner, OHFA must use the utility allowances in effect at the time the new lease and HAP contract are executed.

At reexamination, OHFA must use the current utility allowance schedule [24 CFR 982.517(d)(2)].

Revised utility allowances will be applied to a family's rent and subsidy calculations at the first annual reexamination after the allowance is adopted. The utility allowance used to calculate the gross rent is based on the actual size of the unit the family selects or the

voucher bedroom size that the family qualifies for under OHFA's subsidy standards, whichever is lower.

11-III.C. NOTIFICATION OF NEW FAMILY SHARE AND HAP AMOUNT

OHFA must notify the owner and family of any changes in the amount of the HAP payment [HUD-52641, HAP Contract]. The notice must include the following information [HCV GB, p. 12-6]:

- The amount and effective date of the new HAP payment
- The amount and effective date of the new family share of the rent
- The amount and effective date of the new tenant rent to owner

The family must be given an opportunity for an informal hearing regarding OHFA's determination of their annual or adjusted income, and the use of such income to compute the housing assistance payment [24 CFR 982.555(a)(1)(i)] (see Chapter 16).

The notice to the family will include the annual and adjusted income amounts that were used to calculate the family share of the rent and the housing assistance payment. The notice also will state the procedures for requesting an informal hearing.

11-III.D. DISCREPANCIES

During an annual or interim reexamination, OHFA may discover that information previously reported by the family was in error, or that the family intentionally misrepresented information. In addition, OHFA may discover errors made by OHFA. When errors resulting in the overpayment or underpayment of subsidy are discovered, corrections will be made in accordance with the policies in Chapter 14.

Chapter 12

TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE AND TENANCY

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations specify the reasons for which Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) can terminate a family's assistance, and the ways in which such terminations must take place. They also dictate the circumstances under which an owner may terminate the tenancy of an assisted family. This chapter presents the policies that govern voluntary and involuntary terminations of assistance, and termination of tenancy by the owner. It is presented in three parts:

Part I: Grounds for Termination of Assistance. This part discusses various reasons that a family's assistance may be terminated, including voluntary termination by the family, termination because the family no longer qualifies to receive subsidy, and termination by OHFA based on the family's behavior.

Part II: Approach to Termination of Assistance. This part describes the policies that govern how an involuntary termination takes place. It specifies the alternatives that OHFA may consider in lieu of termination, the criteria OHFA must use when deciding what action to take, and the steps OHFA must take when terminating a family's assistance.

Part III: Termination of Tenancy by the Owner. This part presents the policies that govern the owner's right to terminate an assisted tenancy.

PART I: GROUNDS FOR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE

12-I.A. OVERVIEW

HUD requires OHFA to terminate assistance for certain offenses and when the family no longer requires assistance. HUD permits OHFA to terminate assistance for certain other actions family members take or fail to take. In addition, a family may decide to stop receiving HCV assistance at any time by notifying OHFA.

12-I.B. FAMILY NO LONGER REQUIRES ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.455]

As a family's income increases, the amount of OHFA subsidy goes down. If the amount of HCV assistance provided by OHFA drops to zero and remains at zero for 180 consecutive calendar days the family's assistance terminates automatically.

> If a participating family, receiving zero assistance experiences a change in circumstances that would cause the HAP payment to rise above zero, the family must notify OHFA of the changed circumstances and request an interim reexamination before the expiration of the 180-day period.

12-I.C. FAMILY CHOOSES TO TERMINATE ASSISTANCE

The family may request that OHFA terminate the family's assistance at any time.

The request to terminate assistance should be made in writing and signed by the head of household, spouse, or cohead. Before terminating the family's assistance, the PHA will follow the notice requirements in Section 12-II.F.

12-I.D. MANDATORY TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE

HUD requires OHFA to terminate assistance in the following circumstances.

Eviction [24 CFR 982.552(b)(2), 24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)]

OHFA must terminate assistance whenever a family is evicted from a unit assisted under the HCV program for a serious or repeated violation of the lease. As discussed further in section 12-II.E, incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking may not be construed as serious or repeated violations of the lease by the victim or threatened victim of such violence or stalking.

> A family will be considered *evicted* if the family moves after a legal eviction order has been issued, whether or not physical enforcement of the order was necessary.

If a family moves after the owner has given the family an eviction notice for serious or repeated lease violations but before a legal eviction order has been issued, termination of assistance is not mandatory. In such cases, OHFA will determine whether the family has committed serious or repeated violations of the lease based on available evidence and may terminate assistance or take any of the alternative measures described in section 12-II.C. In making its decision, OHFA will consider the factors described in sections 12-II.D and 12-II.E. Upon consideration of such factors, OHFA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate assistance.

Serious and repeated lease violations will include, but not be limited to, nonpayment of rent, disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property, or living or housekeeping habits that cause damage to the unit or premises and criminal activity. Generally, the criterion to be used will be whether or not the reason for the eviction was the fault of the tenant or guests.

Failure to Provide Consent [24 CFR 982.552(b)(3)]

OHFA must terminate assistance if any family member fails to sign and submit any consent form they are required to sign for a reexamination. See Chapter 7 for a complete discussion of consent requirements.

Failure to Document Citizenship [24 CFR 982.552(b)(4) and [24 CFR 5.514(c)]

OHFA must terminate assistance if (1) a family fails to submit required documentation within the required timeframe concerning any family member's citizenship or immigration status; (2) a family submits evidence of citizenship and eligible immigration status in a timely manner, but United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) primary and secondary verification does not verify eligible immigration status of the family; or (3) a family member, as determined by OHFA, has knowingly permitted another individual who is not eligible for assistance to reside (on a permanent basis) in the unit.

For (3) above, such termination must be for a period of at least 24 months. This does not apply to ineligible noncitizens already in the household where the family's assistance has been prorated. See Chapter 7 for a complete discussion of documentation requirements.

Failure to Disclose and Document Social Security Numbers [24 CFR 5.218(c), Notice PIH 2018-24]

OHFA must terminate assistance if a participant family fails to disclose the complete and accurate social security numbers of each household member and the documentation necessary to verify each social security number.

However, if the family is otherwise eligible for continued program assistance, and OHFA determines that the family's failure to meet the SSN disclosure and documentation requirements was due to circumstances that could not have been foreseen and were outside of the family's control, OHFA may defer the family's termination and provide the opportunity to comply with the requirement within a period not to exceed 90 calendar days from the date OHFA determined the family to be noncompliant.

> OHFA will defer the family's termination and provide the family with the opportunity to comply with the requirement for a period of 90 calendar days for circumstances beyond the participant's control such as delayed processing of the SSN application by the SSA, natural disaster, fire, death in the family, or other emergency, if there is a reasonable likelihood that the participant will be able to disclose an SSN by the deadline.

Methamphetamine Manufacture or Production [24 CFR 982.553(b)(1)(ii)]

OHFA must terminate assistance if any household member has ever been convicted of the manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally-assisted housing.

Lifetime Registered Sex Offenders [Notice PIH 2012-28]

Should OHFA discover that a member of an assisted household was subject to a lifetime registration requirement at admission and was erroneously admitted after June 25, 2001, the OHFA must immediately terminate assistance for the household member.

In this situation, OHFA must offer the family the opportunity to remove the ineligible family member from the household. If the family is unwilling to remove that individual from the household, OHFA must terminate assistance for the household.

Failure of Students to Meet Ongoing Eligibility Requirements [24 CFR 982.552(b)(5) and FR 4/10/06]

If a student enrolled at an institution of higher education is under the age of 24, is not a veteran, is not married, does not have dependent children, is not residing with their parents in an HCV assisted household, and is not a person with disabilities receiving HCV assistance as of November 30, 2005, OHFA must terminate the student's assistance if, at the time of reexamination, either the student's income or the income of the student's parents (if applicable) exceeds the applicable income limit.

If a participant household consists of both eligible and ineligible students, the eligible students shall not be terminated, but must be issued a voucher to move with continued assistance in accordance with program regulations and OHFA policies, or must be given the opportunity to lease in place if the terminated ineligible student members elect to move out of the assisted unit.

Death of the Sole Family Member [24 CFR 982.311(d) and Notice PIH 2010-9]

OHFA must immediately terminate program assistance for deceased single member households.

12-I.E. MANDATORY POLICIES AND OTHER AUTHORIZED TERMINATIONS

Mandatory Policies [24 CFR 982.553(b), 982.551(l), HUD Memorandum from Sandra B. Henriquez February 10, 2011, and HUD Memorandum from Helen R. Kanovsky January 20, 2011]

HUD requires OHFA to establish policies that permit OHFA to terminate assistance if OHFA determines that:

- Any household member is currently engaged in any illegal use of a drug, or has a pattern of illegal drug use that interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents
- Any household member's abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents
- Any household member has violated the family's obligation not to engage in any drug-related criminal activity
- Any household member has violated the family's obligation not to engage in violent criminal activity

Use of Illegal Drugs and Alcohol Abuse

HUD indicates that OHFA has discretion to determine, on a case-by-case basis, the appropriateness of program termination of existing residents for the use of medical marijuana. OHFA may consider all relevant circumstances such as the extent of participation or culpability of individual family members, mitigating circumstances related to the disability of a family member, and the effects of denial or termination of assistance on other family members.

OHFA may determine that a current participant is using marijuana for medicinal purposes as recommended by an Oklahoma physician and verified by a medical marijuana patient license issued by the Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Authority and may decide not to terminate assistance. The license will be in the form of an identification card that can be used to prove an individual is a license holder. OHFA may consider continued assistance for current participants of OHFA's HCV program under the following conditions: (1) Participant has a current medical marijuana license; and (2) Participant's license can be validated through the Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Authority (http://omma.ok.gov/); and (3) No growing or distribution will be permitted, even with a valid license; and (4) No out-of-state medical marijuana licenses are acceptable.

OHFA's decision to not terminate assistance for medical marijuana use does not prevent a property owner/landlord from establishing a policy prohibiting the use of medical marijuana and evicting a family.

OHFA will terminate a family's assistance if any household member is currently engaged in any illegal use of a drug, or has a pattern of illegal drug use that interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

Currently engaged in is defined as any use of illegal drugs during the previous twelve months.

OHFA will terminate assistance if any household member's abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

OHFA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests, convictions, or eviction of household members related to the use of illegal drugs or abuse of alcohol.

OHFA will not use a record of arrest(s) as the only basis for the termination or proof that the participant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

In making its decision to terminate assistance, OHFA will consider alternatives as described in Section 12-II.C and other factors described in Sections 12-II.D and 12-II.E. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, OHFA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate assistance.

Drug-Related and Violent Criminal Activity [24 CFR 5.100]

Drug means a controlled substance as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802).

Drug-related criminal activity is defined by HUD as the illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, or use of a drug, or the possession of a drug with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute, or use the drug.

Violent criminal activity means any criminal activity that has as one of its elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force substantial enough to cause, or be reasonably likely to cause, serious bodily injury or property damage.

OHFA will terminate a family's assistance if any household member has violated the family's obligation not to engage in any drug-related activity (includes possession of drug

paraphernalia); however, OHFA may use its discretion to determine, on a case-by-case basis, the appropriateness of program termination or continued occupancy of existing residents for the use of medical marijuana under Oklahoma state law or violent criminal activity during participation in the HCV program.

OHFA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests and/or convictions of household members related to drug-related or violent criminal activity, and any eviction or notice to evict based on drug-related or violent criminal activity.

OHFA will not use a record of arrest(s) as the only basis for the termination or proof that the participant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

In making its decision to terminate assistance, OHFA will consider alternatives as described in Section 12-II.C and other factors described in Sections 12-II.D and 12-II.E. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, OHFA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate assistance.

Other Authorized Reasons for Termination of Assistance [24 CFR 982.552(c), 24 CFR 5.2005(c), 24 CFR 984.101(d)]

HUD permits OHFA to terminate assistance under a number of other circumstances. It is left to the discretion of OHFA whether such circumstances in general warrant consideration for the termination of assistance. As discussed further in section 12-II.E, the Violence Against Women Act of 2013 explicitly prohibits OHFA from considering incidents of, or criminal activity directly related to, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking as reasons for terminating the assistance of a victim of such abuse.

Additionally, per [24 CFR 984.101(d), PHAs are no longer permitted to terminate assistance to a family due to the family's failure to meet its obligations under the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) contract of participation.

OHFA will terminate a family's assistance if:

The family has failed to comply with any family obligations under the program. See Exhibit 12-1 for a listing of family obligations and related OHFA policies.

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

Any PHA has ever terminated assistance under the program for any member of the family.

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

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

The family has not reimbursed any PHA for amounts the PHA paid to an owner under a HAP contract for rent, damages to the unit, or other amounts owed by the family under the lease.

The family has breached the terms of a repayment agreement entered into with OHFA.

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

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

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

In making its decision to terminate assistance, OHFA will consider alternatives as described in Section 12-II.C and other factors described in Sections 12-II.D and 12-II.E. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, OHFA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate assistance.

Family Absence from the Unit [24 CFR 982.312]

The family may be absent from the unit for brief periods. OHFA must establish a policy on how long the family may be absent from the assisted unit. However, the family may not be absent from the unit for a period of more than 180 consecutive calendar days for any reason. Absence in this context means that no member of the family is residing in the unit.

If the family is absent from the unit for more than 180 consecutive calendar days, the family's assistance will be terminated. The family must reapply for assistance and is subject to the eligibility policies in Chapter 3. Notice of termination will be sent in accordance with Section 12-II.F.

Insufficient Funding [24 CFR 982.454]

OHFA may terminate HAP contracts if OHFA determines, in accordance with HUD requirements, that funding under the consolidated ACC is insufficient to support continued assistance for families in the program.

OHFA will determine whether there is sufficient funding to pay for currently assisted families according to the policies in Part VIII of Chapter 16. If OHFA determines there is a shortage of funding, prior to terminating any HAP contracts, OHFA will determine if any other actions can be taken to reduce program costs.

In the event that OHFA decides to stop issuing vouchers as a result of a funding shortfall, and OHFA is not assisting the required number of special purpose vouchers Non Elderly Disabled Families (NED), HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) families, and family unification program (FUP) families), when OHFA resumes issuing vouchers, OHFA will issue vouchers first to the special purpose voucher families on its waiting list until it has reached the required number of special purpose vouchers, when applicable.

If after implementing all reasonable cost cutting measures there is not enough funding available to provide continued assistance for current participants, OHFA will terminate HAP contracts as a last resort.

Prior to terminating any HAP contracts, OHFA will inform the local HUD field office. OHFA will terminate the minimum number needed in order to reduce HAP costs to a level within OHFA's annual budget authority.

If OHFA must terminate HAP contracts due to insufficient funding, OHFA will do so in accordance with the following criteria and instructions:

OHFA will terminate families based on the date of admission to the HCV program. Families admitted last will be terminated first, beginning with non-elderly and non-disabled participants.

Families terminated from the program due to insufficient funding will be placed back on the waiting list by their original date of application. When funding is available, these families will be selected from the waiting list ahead of other waiting list applicants.

PART II: APPROACH TO TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE

12-II.A. OVERVIEW

OHFA is required by regulation to terminate a family's assistance if certain program rules are violated. For other types of offenses, the regulations give OHFA the discretion either to terminate the family's assistance or to take another action. This part discusses the various actions OHFA may choose to take when it has discretion, and outlines the criteria OHFA will use to make its decision about whether or not to terminate assistance. It also specifies the requirements for the notice that must be provided before terminating assistance.

12-II.B. METHOD OF TERMINATION [24 CFR 982.552(a)(3)]

The way in which OHFA terminates assistance depends upon individual circumstances. HUD permits OHFA to terminate assistance by:

- Terminating housing assistance payments under a current HAP contract,
- Refusing to approve a request for tenancy or to enter into a new HAP contract, or
- Refusing to process a request for or to provide assistance under portability procedures.

12-II.C. ALTERNATIVES TO TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE

Change in Household Composition

As a condition of continued assistance, OHFA may require that any household member who participated in or was responsible for an offense no longer resides in the unit [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)(ii)].

As a condition of continued assistance, the head of household must certify that the culpable family member has vacated the unit and will not be permitted to visit or to stay as a guest in the assisted unit. The family must present evidence of the former family member's current address upon OHFA request.

Repayment of Family Debts

If a family owes amounts to OHFA, as a condition of continued assistance, OHFA will require the family to repay the full amount or to enter into a repayment agreement, within 30 days of receiving notice from OHFA of the amount owed. See Chapter 16 for policies on repayment agreements.

12-II.D. CRITERIA FOR DECIDING TO TERMINATE ASSISTANCE

Evidence

For criminal activity, HUD permits OHFA to terminate assistance if a *preponderance of the evidence* indicates that a household member has engaged in the activity, regardless of whether the household member has been arrested or convicted [24 CFR 982.553(c)].

OHFA will use the concept of the preponderance of the evidence as the standard for making all termination decisions.

Preponderance of the evidence is defined as evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence which as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not. Preponderance of the evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence

Consideration of Circumstances [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)(i)]

OHFA is permitted, but not required, to consider all relevant circumstances when determining whether a family's assistance should be terminated.

OHFA will consider the following factors when making its decision to terminate assistance:

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

The effects that termination of assistance may have on other members of the family who were not involved in the action or failure to act

The extent of participation or culpability of individual family members, including a person with disabilities or (as discussed further in section 12-II.E) a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking

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

While a record of arrest(s) will not be used as the basis for termination, an arrest may, however, trigger an investigation to determine whether the participant actually engaged in disqualifying criminal activity. As part of its investigation, OHFA may obtain the police report associated with the arrest and consider the reported circumstances of the arrest. OHFA may also consider:

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

Whether criminal charges were filed

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

Any other evidence relevant to determining whether or not the participant engaged in disqualifying activity

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

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

OHFA will require the participant to submit evidence of the household member's current participation in or successful completion of a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program, or evidence of otherwise having been rehabilitated successfully. However, if assistance is continued and the participant fails to complete the supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program or other recommended rehabilitation program, it may result in termination of the family's assistance.

In the case of program abuse, the dollar amount of the overpaid assistance and whether or not a false certification was signed by the family

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

If the family includes a person with disabilities, OHFA's decision to terminate the family's assistance is subject to consideration of reasonable accommodation in accordance with 24 CFR Part 8.

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

12-II.E. TERMINATIONS RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING

This section addresses the protections against termination of assistance that the Violence Against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) provides for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. For general VAWA requirements and OHFA policies pertaining to notification, documentation, and confidentiality, see section 16-IX of this plan, where definitions of key VAWA terms are also located.

VAWA Protections Against Termination

VAWA provides four specific protections against termination of HCV assistance for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking. (*Note:* The second, third, and fourth protections also apply to terminations of tenancy or occupancy by owners participating in the HCV program. So do the limitations discussed under the next heading.)

First, VAWA provides that OHFA may not terminate assistance to a family that moves out of an assisted unit in violation of the lease, with or without prior notification to OHFA, if the move occurred to protect the health or safety of a family member who is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking, and who reasonably believed he or she was imminently threatened by harm from further violence if he or she remained in the unit [24 CFR 982.354(b)(4)].

Second, it provides that an incident or incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking may not be construed either as a serious or repeated lease violation by the victim or as good cause to terminate the assistance of the victim [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)].

Third, it provides that criminal activity directly related to domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking may not be construed as cause for terminating the assistance of a tenant if a member of the tenant's household, a guest, or another person under the tenant's control is the one engaging in the criminal activity and the tenant or an affiliated individual of the tenant is the actual or threatened victim of the domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(2)].

Fourth, it gives OHFA the authority to terminate assistance to any tenant or lawful occupant who engages in criminal acts of physical violence against family members or others without terminating assistance to, or otherwise penalizing, the victim of the violence [24 CFR 5.2009(a)].

Limitations on VAWA Protections [24 CFR 5.2005(d) and (e)]

VAWA does not limit the authority of OHFA to terminate the assistance of a victim of abuse for reasons unrelated to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human traffickingso long as OHFA does not subject the victim to a more demanding standard than it applies to other program participants [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(1)].

Likewise, VAWA does not limit the authority of OHFA to terminate the assistance of a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking if OHFA can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing service to the assisted property if the victim is not terminated from assistance [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(2)].

HUD regulations define *actual and imminent threat* to mean words, gestures, actions, or other indicators of a physical threat that (a) is real, (b) would occur within an immediate time frame, and (c) could result in death or serious bodily harm [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(2) and (e)]. In determining whether an individual would pose an actual and imminent threat, the factors to be considered include:

- The duration of the risk
- The nature and severity of the potential harm
- The likelihood that the potential harm will occur
- The length of time before the potential harm would occur [24 CFR 5.2005(e)]

In order to demonstrate an actual and imminent threat, the PHA must have objective evidence of words, gestures, actions, or other indicators. Even when a victim poses an actual and imminent threat, however, HUD regulations authorize OHFA to terminate the victim's assistance "only when there are no other actions that could be taken to reduce or eliminate the threat" [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(3)].

In determining whether a program participant who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, or human trafficking is an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing service to a property, OHFA will consider the following, and any other relevant, factors:

Whether the threat is toward an employee or tenant other than the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking

Whether the threat is a physical danger beyond a speculative threat

Whether the threat is likely to happen within an immediate time frame

Whether the threat to other tenants or employees can be eliminated in some other way, such as by helping the victim relocate to a confidential location or seeking a legal remedy to prevent the perpetrator from acting on the threat

If the participant wishes to contest OHFA's determination that he or she is an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or employees, the participant may do so as part of the informal hearing.

Documentation of Abuse [24 CFR 5.2007]

When an individual facing termination of assistance for reasons related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking claims protection under VAWA, OHFA will request that the individual provide documentation supporting the claim in accordance with the policies in section 16-IX.D of this plan.

OHFA reserves the right to waive the documentation requirement if it determines that a statement or other corroborating evidence from the individual will suffice. In such cases, OHFA will document the waiver in the individual's file.

Terminating the Assistance of a Domestic Violence Perpetrator

Although VAWA provides protection against termination of assistance for victims of domestic violence, it does not provide such protection for perpetrators. VAWA gives OHFA the explicit authority to "terminate assistance to any individual who is a tenant or lawful occupant and who engages in criminal acts of physical violence against family members or others" without terminating assistance to "or otherwise penalizing the victim of such violence who is also a tenant or lawful occupant" [24 CFR 5.2009(a)]. This authority is not dependent on a bifurcated lease or other eviction action by an owner against an individual family member. Further, this authority supersedes any local, state, or other federal law to the contrary. However, if OHFA chooses to exercise this authority, it must follow any procedures prescribed by HUD or by applicable local, state, or federal law regarding termination of assistance. This means that OHFA must follow the same rules when terminating assistance to an individual as it would when terminating the assistance of an entire family [3/16/07 *Federal Register* notice on the applicability of VAWA to HUD programs].

If the perpetrator remains in the unit, OHFA continues to pay the owner until OHFA terminates the perpetrator from the program. OHFA must not stop paying HAP until 30 days after the owner bifurcates the lease to evict the perpetrator. OHFA may pay HAP for the full month if the 30-day period will end mid-month [Notice PIH 2017-08].

If the perpetrator is the only participant eligible to receive assistance, OHFA will provide any remaining participant a chance to establish eligibility for the program. If the remaining participant cannot do so, the PHA will provide them with 30 days to establish eligibility for another housing program prior to termination of the HAP contract.

OHFA will terminate assistance to a family member if OHFA determines that the family member has committed criminal acts of physical violence against other family members or others. This action will not affect the assistance of the remaining, nonculpable family members.

In making its decision, OHFA will consider all credible evidence, including, but not limited to, a signed certification (form HUD-5382) or other documentation of abuse submitted to OHFA by the victim in accordance with this section and section 16-IX.D. OHFA will also consider the factors in section 12-II.D. Upon such consideration, OHFA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the assistance of the culpable family member.

If OHFA does terminate the assistance of the culpable family member, it will do so in accordance with applicable law, HUD regulations, and the policies in this plan.

12-II.F. TERMINATION NOTICE

HUD regulations require OHFA to provide written notice of termination of assistance to a family only when the family is entitled to an informal hearing. However, since the family's HAP contract and lease will also terminate when the family's assistance terminates [form HUD-52641], it is a good business practice to provide written notification to both owner and family anytime assistance will be terminated, whether voluntarily or involuntarily.

> Whenever a family's assistance will be terminated, OHFA will send a written notice of termination to the family and to the owner. OHFA will also send a VAWA Notice of Occupancy Rights and form HUD-5382 to the family with the termination notice. The notice will state the date on which the termination will become effective. This date generally will be at least 30 calendar days following the date of the termination notice, but exceptions will be made whenever HUD rules, other OHFA policies, or the circumstances surrounding the termination require.
>
> When OHFA notifies an owner that a family's assistance will be terminated, OHFA will, if appropriate, advise the owner of their right to offer the family a separate, unassisted lease.

If a family whose assistance is being terminated is entitled to an informal hearing, the notice of termination that OHFA sends to the family must meet the additional HUD and OHFA notice requirements discussed in section 16-III.C of this plan. VAWA 2013 expands notification requirements to require OHFA to provide notice of VAWA rights and the HUD-5382 form when OHFA terminates a household's housing benefits.

> Whenever OHFA decides to terminate a family's assistance because of the family's action or failure to act, OHFA will include in its termination notice the VAWA Notice of Occupancy Rights and a form HUD-5382. OHFA will request in writing that a family member wishing to claim protection under VAWA notify OHFA within 14 business days.

Still other notice requirements apply in two situations:

- If a criminal record is the basis of a family's termination, OHFA must provide a copy of the record to the subject of the record and the tenant so that they have an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the record [24 CFR 982.553(d)(2)].
- If immigration status is the basis of a family's termination, as discussed in section 12-I.D, the special notice requirements in section 16-III.D must be followed.

PART III: TERMINATION OF TENANCY BY THE OWNER

12-III.A. OVERVIEW

Termination of an assisted tenancy is a matter between the owner and the family; OHFA is not directly involved. However, the owner is under some constraints when terminating an assisted tenancy. Termination of tenancy for certain reasons will also result in termination of assistance as discussed in this section.

12-III.B. GROUNDS FOR OWNER TERMINATION OF TENANCY [24 CFR 982.310, 24 CFR 5.2005(c), and Form HUD-52641-A, Tenancy Addendum]

During the term of the lease, the owner is not permitted to terminate the tenancy except for serious or repeated violations of the lease, certain violations of state or local law, or other good cause.

Serious or Repeated Lease Violations

The owner is permitted to terminate the family's tenancy for serious or repeated violations of the terms and conditions of the lease, except when the violations are related to incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, and the victim is protected from eviction by the Violence Against Women Act of 2013 (see section 12-II.E). A serious lease violation includes failure to pay rent or other amounts due under the lease. However, OHFA's failure to make a HAP payment to the owner is not a violation of the lease between the family and the owner.

Violation of Federal, State, or Local Law

The owner is permitted to terminate the tenancy if a family member violates federal, state, or local law that imposes obligations in connection with the occupancy or use of the premises.

Criminal Activity or Alcohol Abuse

The owner may terminate tenancy during the term of the lease if any *covered person*—meaning any member of the household, a guest, or another person under the tenant's control—commits any of the following types of criminal activity (for applicable definitions see 24 CFR 5.100):

- Any criminal activity that threatens the health or safety of, or the right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by, other residents (including property management staff residing on the premises)
- Any criminal activity that threatens the health or safety of, or the right to peaceful enjoyment of their residences by, persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises

- Any violent criminal activity on or near the premises
- Any drug-related criminal activity on or near the premises

However, in the case of criminal activity directly related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, if the tenant or an affiliated individual is the victim, the criminal activity may not be construed as cause for terminating the victim's tenancy (see section 12-II.E).

The owner may terminate tenancy during the term of the lease if any member of the household is:

- Fleeing to avoid prosecution, custody, or confinement after conviction for a crime or an attempt to commit a crime that is a felony under the laws of the place from which the individual flees, or that, in the case of the State of New Jersey, is a high misdemeanor; or
- Violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under federal or state law.

The owner may terminate tenancy during the term of the lease if any member of the household has engaged in abuse of alcohol that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

Evidence of Criminal Activity

The owner may terminate tenancy and evict by judicial action a family for criminal activity by a covered person if the owner determines the covered person has engaged in the criminal activity, regardless of whether the covered person has been arrested or convicted for such activity and without satisfying the standard of proof used for a criminal conviction. This is the case except in certain incidents where the criminal activity directly relates to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking,and the tenant or an affiliated individual is the victim or threatened victim of the domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Other Good Cause

During the initial lease term, the owner may not terminate the tenancy for "other good cause" unless the owner is terminating the tenancy because of something the family did or failed to do. During the initial lease term or during any extension term, other good cause includes the disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property, or living or housekeeping habits that cause damage to the unit or premises.

After the initial lease term, "other good cause" for termination of tenancy by the owner includes:

- Failure by the family to accept the offer of a new lease or revision

- The owner's desire to use the unit for personal or family use, or for a purpose other than as a residential rental unit
- A business or economic reason for termination of the tenancy (such as sale of the property, renovation of the unit, or desire to lease the unit at a higher rent)

After the initial lease term, the owner may give the family notice at any time, in accordance with the terms of the lease.

If a property is subject to foreclosure, during the term of the lease, the new owner of the property does not have good cause to terminate the tenant's lease, unless the new owner will occupy the unit as their primary residence and has provided the tenant with at least a 90-day notice. In that case, the lease may be terminated effective on the date of sale, although the tenant is still entitled to a 90-day notice to vacate. See Section 13-II.G for a discussion of OHFA policies relating to units in foreclosure.

12-III.C. EVICTION [24 CFR 982.310(e) and (f) and Form HUD-52641-A, Tenancy Addendum]

The owner must give the tenant a written notice that specifies the grounds for termination of tenancy during the term of the lease. The tenancy does not terminate before the owner has given this notice, and the notice must be given at or before commencement of the eviction action.

The notice of grounds may be included in, or may be combined with, any owner eviction notice to the tenant.

Owner eviction notice means a notice to vacate, or a complaint or other initial pleading used under state or local law to commence an eviction action. The owner may only evict the tenant from the unit by instituting a court action. The owner must give OHFA a copy of any eviction notice at the same time the owner notifies the family. The family is also required to give OHFA a copy of any eviction notice (see Chapter 5).

> If the eviction action is finalized in court, the owner must provide OHFA with documentation related to the eviction, including notice of the eviction date, as soon as possible, but no later than five business days following the court-ordered eviction.

12-III.D. DECIDING WHETHER TO TERMINATE TENANCY [24 CFR 982.310(h), 24 CFR 982.310(h)(4)]

An owner who has grounds to terminate a tenancy is not required to do so, and may consider all of the circumstances relevant to a particular case before making a decision. These might include:

- The nature of the offending action
- The seriousness of the offending action;
- The effect on the community of the termination, or of the owner's failure to terminate the tenancy;
- The extent of participation by the leaseholder in the offending action;
- The effect of termination of tenancy on household members not involved in the offending activity;
- The demand for assisted housing by families who will adhere to lease responsibilities;
- The extent to which the leaseholder has shown personal responsibility and taken all reasonable steps to prevent or mitigate the offending action;
- The effect of the owner's action on the integrity of the program.

The owner may require a family to exclude a household member in order to continue to reside in the assisted unit, where that household member has participated in or been culpable for action or failure to act that warrants termination.

In determining whether to terminate tenancy for illegal use of drugs or alcohol abuse by a household member who is no longer engaged in such behavior, the owner may consider whether such household member is participating in or has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program, or has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully (42 U.S.C. 13661). For this purpose, the owner may require the tenant to submit evidence of the household member's current participation in, or successful completion of, a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program or evidence of otherwise having been rehabilitated successfully.

The owner's termination of tenancy actions must be consistent with the fair housing and equal opportunity provisions in 24 CFR 5.105.

An owner's decision to terminate tenancy for incidents related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, is limited by the Violence Against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) and the conforming regulations in 24 CFR Part 5, Subpart L. (See section 12-II.E.)

12-III.E. EFFECT OF TENANCY TERMINATION ON THE FAMILY'S ASSISTANCE

If a termination is not due to a serious or repeated violation of the lease, and if OHFA has no other grounds for termination of assistance, OHFA may issue a new voucher so that the family can move with continued assistance (see Chapter 10).

EXHIBIT 12-1: STATEMENT OF FAMILY OBLIGATIONS

Following is a listing of a participant family's obligations under the HCV program:

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

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

- The family must allow OHFA to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice, as described in Chapter 8 of this plan.
- The family must not commit any serious or repeated violation of the lease.

  OHFA will determine if a family has committed serious or repeated violations of the lease based on available evidence, including but not limited to, a court-ordered eviction or an owner's notice to evict, police reports, and affidavits from the owner, neighbors, or other credible parties with direct knowledge*Serious and repeated lease violations* will include, but not be limited to, nonpayment of rent, disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property, living, or housekeeping habits that cause damage to the unit or premises, and criminal activity. Generally, the criterion to be used will be whether or not the reason for the eviction was the fault of the tenant or guests. Any incidents of, or criminal activity related to, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, will not be construed as serious or repeated lease violations by the victim [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)].

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

  The family must comply with lease requirements regarding written notice to the owner. The family must provide written notice to OHFA at the same time the owner is notified.

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

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

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

  Subleasing includes receiving payment to cover rent and utility costs by a person living in the unit who is not listed as a family member.

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

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

- The family must pay utility bills and provide and maintain any appliances that the owner is not required to provide under the lease [Form HUD-52646, Voucher].
- The family must not own or have any interest in the unit, (other than in a cooperative and owners of a manufactured home leasing a manufactured home space).
- Family members must not commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the program. (See Chapter 14, Program Integrity for additional information).

- Family members must not engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. See Chapter 12 for HUD and OHFA policies related to drug-related and violent criminal activity.
- Members of the household must not engage in abuse of alcohol in a way that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. See Chapter 12 for a discussion of HUD and OHFA policies related to alcohol abuse.
- An assisted family or member of the family must not receive HCV program assistance while receiving another housing subsidy, for the same unit or a different unit under any other federal, state, or local housing assistance program.
- A family must not receive HCV program assistance while residing in a unit owned by a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother of any member of the family, unless OHFA has determined (and has notified the owner and the family of such determination) that approving rental of the unit, notwithstanding such relationship, would provide reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with disabilities. [Form HUD-52646, Voucher]

RESERVED

Chapter 13

OWNERS

INTRODUCTION

Owners play a central role in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program by supplying decent, safe, and sanitary housing for participating families.

The term "owner" refers to any person or entity with the legal right to lease or sublease a unit to a participant in the HCV program [24 CFR 982.4(b)]. The term "owner" includes a principal or other interested party [24 CFR 982.453; 24 CFR 982.306(f)], such as a designated agent of the owner.

Owners have numerous responsibilities under the program, including screening and leasing to families, maintaining the dwelling unit, enforcing the lease, and complying with various contractual obligations. However, this chapter is not meant to be an overview of all aspects of owner participation in the HCV program.

The chapter is organized in two parts:

> Part I: Owners in the HCV Program. This part discusses the role of an owner in the Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency's (OHFA) HCV program and highlights key owner rights and responsibilities.
>
> Part II: HAP Contracts. This part explains provisions of the HAP contract and the relationship between the OHFA and the owner as expressed in the HAP contract.

For detailed information about HCV program responsibilities and processes, including OHFA policies in key areas, owners will need to refer to several other chapters in this plan. Where appropriate, Chapter 13 will reference the other chapters.

PART I. OWNERS IN THE HCV PROGRAM

13-I.A. OWNER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION [HCV GB, pp. 2-4 to 2-6]

Recruitment

OHFA is responsible for ensuring that very low-income families have access to all types and ranges of affordable housing in OHFA's jurisdiction, particularly housing outside areas of poverty or minority concentration. A critical element in fulfilling this responsibility is for OHFA to ensure that a sufficient number of owners, representing all types and ranges of affordable housing in OHFA's jurisdiction, are willing to participate in the HCV program.

OHFA will conduct owner outreach to ensure that owners are familiar with the program and its advantages. OHFA will actively recruit property owners with property located outside areas of poverty and minority concentration. These outreach strategies will include:

Distributing printed material about the program to property owners and managers

Contacting property owners and managers by phone or in-person

Holding owner information meetings at least once a year

Participating in community based organizations comprised of private property and apartment owners and managers, when invited to do so

Developing working relationships with owners, apartment associations, industry investor groups, and real estate brokers associations

Partner with organizations to provide fair housing training at owner information meetings

OHFA utilizes www.gosection8.com to maintain a list of interested landlords for the Section 8 Program. This listing may be accessed by the public. A printed list of available units will be provided to applicants at initial briefings and upon request to current participants.

Outreach strategies will be monitored for effectiveness, and adapted accordingly.

Retention

OHFA will also provide the kind of customer service that will encourage participating owners to remain active in the program.

All OHFA activities that may affect an owner's ability to lease a unit will be processed as rapidly as possible, in order to minimize vacancy losses for owners.

OHFA will provide owners with a handbook that explains the program, including U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and OHFA policies and procedures, in easy-to-understand language.

OHFA will help new owners succeed through activities such as:

Coordinating inspection and leasing activities between OHFA, the owner, and the family.

Explain the inspection process, and provide resource material about HUD housing quality standards.

Providing other written information about how the program operates

Posting relevant HCV program guidance and information on OHFA's Website at: www.ohfa.org

Additional services may be undertaken on an as-needed basis, and as resources permit.

13-I.B. BASIC HCV PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

HUD requires OHFA to aid families in their housing search by providing the family with a list of landlords or other parties known to OHFA who may be willing to lease a unit to the family, or to help the family find a unit. Although OHFA cannot maintain a list of owners that are pre-qualified to participate in the program, owners may indicate to OHFA their willingness to lease a unit to an eligible HCV family, or to help the HCV family find a unit [24 CFR 982.301(b)(11)].

Owners that wish to indicate their willingness to lease a unit to an eligible HCV family will be instructed to list their available property on goSection8.com. OHFA will maintain a listing of such properties and provide this listing to the HCV family as part of the informational briefing packet.

When a family approaches an owner to apply for tenancy, the owner is responsible for screening the family and deciding whether to lease to the family, just as the owner would with any

potential tenant. OHFA has no liability or responsibility to the owner or other persons for the family's behavior or suitability for tenancy. See chapters 3 and 9 for more detail on tenant family screening policies and process.

If the owner is willing, the family and the owner must jointly complete a Scheduling Appointment Request Form (SARF) to request tenancy approval. When submitted to OHFA, this document is the first step in the process of obtaining approval for the family to receive the financial assistance it will need in order to occupy the unit. A Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA, Form HUD 52517) must be completed at the time the lease and HAP contract are executed, which documents the family's request for assistance in the specified unit, and which documents the owner's willingness to lease to the family and to follow the program's requirements. The owner's lease must include the HUD-required Tenancy Addendum (Form HUD-52641-A) language or must be a lease attachment. See Chapter 9 for more detail on request for tenancy approval policies and process.

HUD regulations stipulate that an assisted tenancy can be approved only under certain conditions.

The owner must be qualified to participate in the program [24 CFR 982.306]. Some owners are precluded from participating in the program, or from renting to a particular family, either because of their past history with this or another federal housing program, or because of certain conflicts of interest. Owner qualifications are discussed later in this chapter.

The selected unit must be of a type that is eligible for the program [24 CFR 982.305(a)]. Certain types of dwelling units cannot be assisted under the HCV program. Other types may be assisted under certain conditions. In addition, the owner must document legal ownership of the specified unit. See chapter 9 for more detail on unit eligibility policies and process.

The selected unit must meet HUD's Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and/or equivalent state or local standards approved by HUD [24 CFR 982.305(a)]. OHFA will inspect the owner's dwelling unit at various stages of HCV program participation, to ensure that the unit continues to meet HQS requirements. See chapter 8 for a discussion of the HQS standards, as well as the process for HQS inspections at initial lease-up and throughout the family's tenancy.

OHFA must determine that the cost of the unit is reasonable [24 CFR 982.305(a)]. The rent must be reasonable in relation to comparable unassisted units in the area and must not be in excess of rents charged by the owner for comparable, unassisted units on the premises. See chapter 8 for a discussion of requirements and policies on rent reasonableness, rent comparability and the rent reasonableness determination process.

At initial lease-up of a unit, OHFA must determine that the share of rent to be paid by the family does not exceed 40 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income [24 CFR 982.305(a)]. See chapter 6 for a discussion of the calculation of family income, family share of rent and HAP.

The dwelling lease must comply with all program requirements [24 CFR 982.308]. Owners are encouraged to use their standard leases when renting to an assisted family. However, the HCV program requires that the Tenancy Addendum, which helps standardize the tenancy requirements for all assisted families, be added word-for-word to that lease. See chapter 9 for a discussion of the dwelling lease and tenancy addendum, including lease terms and provisions. OHFA and the owner enter into a formal contractual relationship by executing the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract (Form HUD-52641). The HAP contract format is prescribed by HUD. See chapter 9 for a discussion of the HAP contract execution process. Specific HAP contract provisions and responsibilities are discussed in Part II of Chapter 13.

13-I.C. OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES [24 CFR 982.452]

The basic owner responsibilities in the HCV program are outlined in the regulations as follows:

- Complying with all of the owner's obligations under the housing assistance payments (HAP) contract and the lease
- Performing all management and rental functions for the assisted unit, including selecting a voucher-holder to lease the unit, and deciding if the family is suitable for tenancy of the unit
- Maintaining the unit in accordance with the Housing Quality Standards (HQS), including performance of ordinary and extraordinary maintenance
- Complying with equal opportunity requirements
- Preparing and furnishing to OHFA information required under the HAP contract
- Collecting from the family any security deposit, the tenant's contribution to rent (that part of rent to owner not covered by the housing assistance payment from OHFA), and any charges for unit damage by the family.
- Enforcing tenant obligations under the dwelling lease
- Paying for utilities and services (unless paid by the family under the lease)
- Allowing modifications to a dwelling unit occupied or to be occupied by a disabled person [24 CFR 100.203]
- Complying with the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA) when screening prospective HCV tenants or terminating the tenancy of an HCV family (see 24 CFR Part 5, Subpart L; 24 CFR 982.310(h)(4); and 24 CFR 982.452(b)(1))

13-I.D. OWNER QUALIFICATIONS

OHFA does not formally approve an owner to participate in the HCV program. However, there are a number of criteria where OHFA may deny approval of an assisted tenancy based on past

owner behavior, conflict of interest, or other owner-related issues. No owner has a right to participate in the HCV program [24 CFR 982.306(e)].

Owners Barred from Participation [24 CFR 982.306(a) and (b)]

OHFA must not approve the assisted tenancy if OHFA has been informed that the owner has been debarred, suspended, or subject to a limited denial of participation under 24 CFR part 24. HUD may direct OHFA not to approve a tenancy request if a court or administrative agency has determined that the owner violated the Fair Housing Act or other federal equal opportunity requirements, or if such an action is pending.

Leasing to Relatives [24 CFR 982.306(d), HCV GB p. 11-2]

OHFA must not approve an RFTA if the owner is the parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of the family. OHFA may make an exception as a reasonable accommodation for a family member with a disability. The owner is required to certify that no such relationship exists. This restriction applies at the time that the family receives assistance under the HCV program for occupancy of a particular unit. Current contracts on behalf of owners and families that are related may continue, but any new leases or contracts for these families may not be approved.

Conflict of Interest [24 CFR 982.161; HCV GB p. 8-19]

OHFA must not approve a tenancy in which any of the following classes of persons has any interest, direct or indirect, during tenure or for one year thereafter:

- Any present or former member or officer of OHFA (except a participant commissioner)
- Any employee of OHFA, or any contractor, subcontractor or agent of OHFA, who formulates policy or who influences decisions with respect to the programs
- Any public official, member of a governing body, or State or local legislator, who exercises functions or responsibilities with respect to the programs
- Any member of the Congress of the United States

To avoid any appearance of impropriety, no employee of OHFA can participate in the HCV Program administered by OHFA as either a landlord or the recipient of rental assistance, unless a waiver is requested from, and approved by, HUD. This prohibition also extends to the immediate family members of all OHFA supervisors as defined above. The determination of whether to seek a waiver will be made by the Executive Director in consultation with the employee. Please note that participation in an HCV Program administered by another PHA is not prohibited.

Any employee participating in OHFA's HCV Program or who has an immediate family member participating in OHFA's HCV Program must immediately disclose this information, in writing, to

their Department Director, the Director of Human Resources, and the Executive Director. An employee is strictly prohibited from accessing and handling the file of a family member.

HUD may waive the conflict of interest requirements, except for members of Congress, for good cause. OHFA must submit a waiver request to the appropriate HUD Field Office for determination.

Any waiver request submitted by OHFA must include [HCV Guidebook pp. 11-2 and 11-3]:

- Complete statement of the facts of the case;
- Analysis of the specific conflict of interest provision of the HAP contract and justification as to why the provision should be waived;
- Analysis of and statement of consistency with state and local laws. The local HUD office, OHFA, or both parties may conduct this analysis. Where appropriate, an opinion by the state's attorney general should be obtained;
- Opinion by the local HUD office as to whether there would be an appearance of impropriety if the waiver were granted;
- Statement regarding alternative existing housing available for lease under the HCV program or other assisted housing if the waiver is denied;
- If the case involves a hardship for a particular family, statement of the circumstances and discussion of possible alternatives;
- If the case involves a public official or member of the governing body, explanation of their duties under state or local law, including reference to any responsibilities involving the HCV program;
- If the case involves employment of a family member by OHFA or assistance under the HCV program for an eligible OHFA employee, explanation of the responsibilities and duties of the position, including any related to the HCV program;
- If the case involves an investment on the part of a member, officer, or employee of OHFA, description of the nature of the investment, including disclosure/divestiture plans.

Where OHFA has requested a conflict of interest waiver, OHFA may not execute the HAP contract until HUD has made a decision on the waiver request.

> In considering whether to request a conflict of interest waiver from HUD, OHFA will consider factors the reasons for waiving the requirement; consistency with state and local laws; the existence of alternative housing available to families; the individual circumstances of a particular family; the specific duties of individuals whose positions present a possible conflict of interest; the nature of any financial investment in the property and plans for disclosure/divestiture; and the possible appearance of impropriety.

Owner Actions That May Result in Disapproval of a Tenancy Request [24 CFR 982.306(c)]

HUD regulations permit OHFA, at OHFA's discretion, to refuse to approve a request for tenancy if the owner has committed any of a number of different actions.

If OHFA disapproves a request for tenancy because an owner is not qualified, it may not terminate the HAP contract for any assisted families that are already living in the owner's properties unless the owner has violated the HAP contract for those units [HCV GB p. 11-4].

OHFA will refuse to approve a request for tenancy if OHFA becomes aware that any of the following are true. Owner includes an authorized representative acting on behalf of the owner:

The owner has violated obligations under a HAP contract under Section 8 of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437f);

The owner has committed fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program;

The owner has engaged in any drug-related criminal activity or any violent criminal activity;

The owner has a history or practice of non-compliance with the HQS for units leased under the tenant-based programs, or with applicable housing standards for units leased with project-based Section 8 assistance or leased under any other federal housing program;

The owner has a history or practice of failing to terminate tenancy of tenants of units assisted under Section 8 or any other federally assisted housing program for activity engaged in by the tenant, any member of the household, a guest or another person under the control of any member of the household that:

(i) Threatens the right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents;

(ii) (ii) Threatens the health or safety of other residents, of employees of OHFA, or of owner employees or other persons engaged in management of the housing;

(iii) (iii) Threatens the health or safety of, or the right to peaceful enjoyment of their residences, by persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises; or

(iv) (iv) Is drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity;

The owner has a history or practice of renting units that fail to meet state or local housing codes; or

The owner has not paid state or local real estate taxes, fines, or assessment.

In considering whether to disapprove owners for any of the discretionary reasons listed above, OHFA will consider any mitigating factors. Such factors may include, but are not limited to, the seriousness of the violation in relation to program requirements, the impact on the ability of families to lease units under the program, health and safety of participating families, among others. Upon consideration of such circumstances, OHFA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose to approve an owner.

Legal Ownership of Unit

The following represents OHFA's policy on legal ownership of a dwelling unit to be assisted under the HCV program.

OHFA will only enter into a contractual relationship with the legal owner of a qualified unit. No tenancy will be approved without acceptable documentation of legal ownership (e.g., deed of trust, proof of taxes for most recent year).**13-I.E. NON-DISCRIMINATION [HAP Contract – Form HUD-52641]**

The owner must not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, familial status, or disability, in connection with any actions or responsibilities under the HCV program and the HAP contract with OHFA.

The owner must cooperate with OHFA and with HUD in conducting any equal opportunity compliance reviews and complaint investigations in connection with the HCV program and the HAP contract with OHFA.

See Chapter 2 for a more thorough discussion of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity requirements in the HCV program.

PART II. HAP CONTRACTS

13-II.A. OVERVIEW

The HAP contract represents a written agreement between OHFA and the owner of the dwelling unit occupied by a HCV assisted family. The contract spells out the owner's responsibilities under the program, as well as OHFA's obligations. Under the HAP contract, OHFA agrees to make housing assistance payments to the owner on behalf of a specific family occupying a specific unit.

The HAP contract is used for all HCV program tenancies except for assistance under the Section 8 homeownership program, and assistance to families that own a manufactured home and lease the space. See chapter 15 for a discussion of any special housing types included in OHFA's HCV program.

If OHFA has given approval for the family of the assisted tenancy, the owner and OHFA execute the HAP contract. See chapter 9 for a discussion of the leasing process, including provisions for execution of the HAP contract.

13-II.B. HAP CONTRACT CONTENTS

The HAP contract format is required by HUD, specifically Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract, Form HUD-52641.

The HAP contract contains three parts.

Part A of the contract includes basic **contract information** about the name of the tenant family, address of the contract unit, names of all household members, first and last dates of initial lease term, amount of initial monthly rent to owner, amount of initial housing assistance payment, utilities and appliances to be supplied by owner and tenant, signatures of OHFA and owner [HCV Guidebook, pp. 11-10 and 11-11].

In general, the HAP contract cannot be modified. However, OHFA does have the discretion to add language to Part A of the HAP contract, which prohibits the owner from collecting a security deposit in excess of private market practices or in excess of amounts charged to unassisted tenants. OHFA's policy on the amount of security deposit an owner may collect is found in chapter 9.

In addition, OHFA has the discretion to define when the housing assistance payment by OHFA is deemed received by the owner.

OHFA will pay HAP by direct deposit each month. If an owner fails to register for direct deposit, OHFA will require the owner to provide OHFA with a self-addressed stamped envelope each month (prior to the scheduled check run) in order for OHFA to mail the payment.

OHFA considers the housing assistance payment received by the owner upon (1) mailing of the check (if the owner has provided OHFA with a self-addressed stamped envelope prior to the scheduled check run); (2) printing of the check (if the owner has not provided OHFA with a self-addressed stamped envelope prior to the scheduled check run); (3) posting date of the direct deposit payment by the bank.

Part B is the body of the contract. It describes in detail program requirements affecting the owner and owner roles and responsibilities under the HCV program. Most of the requirements contained in Part B of the HAP contract are outlined elsewhere in this plan. Topics addressed in Part B include:

- Lease of Contract Unit
- Maintenance, Utilities, and Other Services
- Term of HAP Contract
- Provision and Payment of Utilities and Appliances
- Rent to Owner: Reasonable Rent
- OHFA Payment to Owner
- Prohibition of Discrimination
- Owner's Breach of HAP Contract
- OHFA and HUD Access to Premises and Owner's Records
- Exclusion of Third Party Rights
- Conflict of Interest
- Assignment of the HAP Contract
- Written Notices
- Entire Agreement Interpretation

Part C of the contract includes the Tenancy Addendum (Form HUD-52641-A). The addendum sets forth the tenancy requirements for the program and the composition of the household, as approved by OHFA. The owner must sign the HUD Tenancy Addendum with the prospective tenant, and the tenant has the right to enforce the Tenancy Addendum against the owner. The terms of the Tenancy Addendum prevail over any other provisions of the lease.

13-II.C. HAP CONTRACT PAYMENTS

General

During the term of the HAP contract, and subject to the provisions of the HAP contract, OHFA must make monthly HAP payments to the owner on behalf of the family, usually at the beginning of each month but no sooner than when OHFA receives HAP funds from HUD. If a lease term begins after the first of the month, the HAP payment for the first month is prorated for a partial month.

The amount of the HAP payment is determined according to the policies described in Chapter 6, and is subject to change during the term of the HAP contract. OHFA must notify the owner and the family in writing of any changes in the HAP payment.

HAP payments can be made only during the lease term, and only while the family is residing in the unit.

The monthly HAP payment by OHFA is credited toward the monthly rent to owner under the family's lease. The total of the rent paid by the tenant, plus OHFA HAP payment, should be equal to the rent specified in the lease (the rent to owner).

The family is not responsible for payment of the HAP payment, and OHFA is not responsible for payment of the family share of rent.

The family's share of the rent cannot be more than the difference between the total rent to the owner and the HAP payment. The owner may not demand or accept any rent payment from the tenant in excess of this maximum [24 CFR 982.451(b)(4)]. The owner may not charge the tenant extra amounts for items customarily included in rent in the locality, or provided at no additional cost to unsubsidized tenants in the premises [24 CFR 982.510(c)]. See chapter 9 for a discussion of separate, non-lease agreements for services, appliances and other items that are not included in the lease.

If the owner receives any excess HAP from OHFA, the excess amount must be returned immediately. If OHFA determines that the owner is not entitled to all or a portion of the HAP, OHFA may deduct the amount of overpayment from any amounts due to the owner, including amounts due under any other Section 8 HCV contract. See Chapter 16 for additional detail on owner reimbursement of HAP overpayments.

Owner Certification of Compliance

Unless the owner complies with all provisions of the HAP contract, the owner is not entitled to receive housing assistance payments under the HAP contract [HAP Contract – Form HUD-52641].

By accepting the monthly check or accepting the monthly direct deposit from OHFA, the owner certifies to compliance with the terms of the HAP contract. This includes certification that the owner is maintaining the unit and premises in accordance with HQS; that the contract unit is leased to the tenant family and, to the best of the owner's knowledge, the family resides in the unit as the family's only residence; the rent to owner does not exceed rents charged by the owner for comparable unassisted units on the premises; and that the owner does not receive (other than rent to owner) any additional payments or other consideration for rent of the contract unit during the HAP term.

Late HAP Payments [24 CFR 982.451(a)(5)]

OHFA is responsible for making HAP payments promptly when due to the owner, in accordance with the terms of the HAP contract. After the first two calendar months of the HAP contract term, the HAP contract provides for penalties if OHFA fails to make the HAP payment on time.

Penalties for late HAP payments can only be imposed if 1) the penalties are in accordance with generally accepted local rental market practices and law governing penalties for late payment by tenants; 2) it is the owner's normal business practice to charge late payment penalties for both assisted and unassisted families; and 3) the owner charges the assisted family for late payment of the family's share of the rent.

OHFA is not required to pay a late payment penalty if HUD determines that the payment is late for reasons beyond OHFA's control. In addition, late payment penalties are not required if OHFA intentionally delays or denies payment as a remedy to an owner breach of the HAP contract [HCV Guidebook p. 11-7].

Termination of HAP Payments [24 CFR 982.311(b)]

OHFA must continue making housing assistance payments to the owner in accordance with the HAP contract as long as the tenant continues to occupy the unit and the HAP contract is not violated.

HAP payments terminate when the HAP contract terminates or when the tenancy is terminated in accordance with the terms of the lease.

If the owner has initiated eviction proceedings against the family and the family continues to reside in the unit, OHFA 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 owner must inform OHFA when the owner has initiated eviction proceedings against the family and the family continues to reside in the unit.
>
> The owner must inform OHFA when the owner has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the tenant, and provide OHFA with a copy of such judgment or determination.
>
> After the owner has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the tenant, OHFA will continue to make HAP payments to the owner until the family actually moves from the unit or until the family is physically evicted from the unit, whichever is earlier. The owner must inform OHFA of the date when the family actually moves from the unit or the family is physically evicted from the unit.

13-II.D. BREACH OF HAP CONTRACT [24 CFR 982.453]

Any of the following actions by the owner constitutes a breach of the HAP contract. Owner includes an authorized representative acting on behalf of the owner:

- If the owner violates any obligations under the HAP contract including failure to maintain the unit in accordance with HQS
- If the owner has violated any obligation under any other HAP contract under Section 8
- If the owner has committed fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program
- For projects with mortgages insured by HUD or loans made by HUD, if the owner has failed to comply with the regulations for the applicable program; or if the owner has committed fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the mortgage or loan
- If the owner has engaged in drug-related criminal activity
- If the owner has committed any violent criminal activity

If OHFA determines that a breach of the HAP contract has occurred, it may exercise any of its rights and remedies under the HAP contract.

OHFA rights and remedies against the owner under the HAP contract include recovery of any HAP overpayment, suspension of housing assistance payments, abatement, or reduction of the housing assistance payment, termination of the payment or termination the HAP contract. OHFA may also obtain additional relief by judicial order or action.

OHFA must notify the owner of its determination and provide in writing the reasons for the determination. The notice may require the owner to take corrective action by an established deadline. OHFA must provide the owner with written notice of any reduction in housing assistance payments or the termination of the HAP contract.

Before OHFA invokes a remedy against an owner, OHFA will evaluate all information and documents available to determine if the contract has been breached.

If relevant, OHFA will conduct an audit of the owner's records pertaining to the tenancy or unit.

If it is determined that the owner has breached the contract, OHFA may consider all of the relevant factors including the seriousness of the breach, the effect on the family, the owner's record of compliance and the number and seriousness of any prior HAP contract violations.

13-II.E. HAP CONTRACT TERM AND TERMINATIONS

The term of the HAP contract runs concurrently with the term of the dwelling lease [24 CFR 982.451(a)(2)], beginning on the first day of the initial term of the lease and terminating on the last day of the term of the lease, including any lease term extensions.

The HAP contract and the housing assistance payments made under the HAP contract terminate if [HCV Guidebook pp. 11-4 and 11-5, pg. 15-3]:

- The owner or the family terminates the lease;
- The lease expires;
- OHFA terminates the HAP contract;
- OHFA terminates assistance for the family;
- The family moves from the assisted unit. In this situation, the owner is entitled to keep the housing assistance payment for the month when the family moves out of the unit.
- 180 calendar days have elapsed since OHFA made the last housing assistance payment to the owner;
- The family is absent from the unit for longer than the maximum period permitted by OHFA;
- The Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) between OHFA and HUD expires
- OHFA elects to terminate the HAP contract.

OHFA may elect to terminate the HAP contract in each of the following situations:

Available program funding is not sufficient to support continued assistance for families in the program [24 CFR 982.454];

The unit does not meet HQS size requirements due to change in family composition [24 CFR 982.403] – see chapter 8;

The unit does not meet HQS [24 CFR 982.404] – see chapter 8;

The family breaks up [HUD Form 52641] – see chapter 3; or

The owner breaches the HAP contract [24 CFR 982.453(b)] – see Section 13-II.D.

If OHFA terminates the HAP contract, OHFA must give the owner and the family written notice. The notice must specify the reasons for the termination and the effective date of the termination. Once a HAP contract is terminated, no further HAP payments may be made under that contract [HCV Guidebook pg.15-4].

The HAP contract terminates at the end of the calendar month that follows the calendar month in which OHFA gives written notice to the owner. The owner is not entitled to any housing assistance payment after this period, and must return to OHFA any housing assistance payment received after this period.

If the family moves from the assisted unit into a new unit, even if the new unit is in the same building or complex as the assisted unit, the HAP contract for the assisted unit terminates. A new HAP contract would be required [HCV GB, p. 11-17].

When the family moves from an assisted unit into a new unit, the term of the HAP contract for the new unit may begin in the same month in which the family moves out of its old unit. This is not considered a duplicative subsidy [HCV GB, p. 8-22].

13-II.F. CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP / ASSIGNMENT OF THE HAP CONTRACT [HUD-52641]

The HAP contract cannot be assigned to a new owner without the prior written consent of OHFA.

An owner under a HAP contract must notify OHFA in writing prior to a change in the legal ownership of the unit. The owner must supply all information as requested by OHFA.

Prior to approval of assignment to a new owner, the new owner must agree to be bound by and comply with the HAP contract. The agreement between the new owner and the former owner must be in writing and in a form that OHFA finds acceptable. The new owner must provide OHFA with a copy of the executed agreement.

Assignment of the HAP contract will be approved only if the new owner is qualified to become an owner under the HCV program according to the policies in Section 13-I.D. of this chapter.

OHFA must receive a signed, written request from the existing owner stating the name and address of the new HAP payee and the effective date of the assignment in order to change the HAP payee under an outstanding HAP contract.

Within 14 days of receiving the owner's request, OHFA will inform the current owner in writing whether the assignment may take place.

The new owner must provide a written certification to OHFA that includes:

A copy of the escrow statement or other document showing the transfer of title and recorded deed;

A copy of the owner's IRS Form W-9, Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification, or the social security number of the new owner;

The effective date of the HAP contract assignment;

A written agreement to comply with the terms of the HAP contract; and

Confirmation that the new owner is not a prohibited relative.

If the new owner does not agree to an assignment of the HAP contract, or fails to provide the necessary documents, OHFA will terminate the HAP contract with the old owner. If the new owner wants to offer the family a new lease, and the family elects to stay with continued assistance, OHFA will process the leasing in accordance with the policies in Chapter 9.

Reserved

Chapter 14

PROGRAM INTEGRITY

INTRODUCTION

Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) is committed to ensuring that subsidy funds made available to OHFA are spent in accordance with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirements.

This chapter covers HUD and OHFA policies designed to prevent, detect, investigate, and resolve instances of program abuse or fraud. It also describes the actions that will be taken in the case of unintentional errors and omissions.

Part I: Preventing, Detecting, and Investigating Errors and Program Abuse. This part presents OHFA's policies related to preventing, detecting, and investigating errors and program abuse.

Part II: Corrective Measures and Penalties. This part describes the corrective measures OHFA must and may take when errors or program abuses are found.

PART I: PREVENTING, DETECTING, AND INVESTIGATING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE

14-I.A. PREVENTING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE

HUD created the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system to provide PHAs with a powerful tool for preventing errors and program abuse. OHFA is required to use the EIV system in its entirety in accordance with HUD administrative guidance [24 CFR 5.233]. OHFA is further required to:

- Provide applicants and participants with form HUD-52675, "Debts Owed to PHAs and Terminations"
- Require all adult members of an applicant or participant family to acknowledge receipt of form HUD-52675 by signing a copy of the form for retention in the family file

    - To ensure that OHFA's HCV program is administered according to the highest ethical and legal standards, the PHA will employ a variety of techniques to ensure that both errors and intentional program abuse are rare.

    - OHFA will discuss program compliance and integrity issues during the voucher briefing sessions described in Chapter 5.

    - OHFA will provide each applicant and participant with a copy of "Is Fraud Worth It?" (form HUD-1141-OIG), which explains the types of actions a family must avoid and the penalties for program abuse.

    - OHDA will provide each applicant and participant with a copy of "What You Should Know about EIV," a guide to the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system published by HUD as an attachment to Notice PIH 2017-12. In addition, OHFA will require the head of each household to acknowledge receipt of the guide by signing a copy for retention in the family file.

    - OHFA will place a warning statement about the penalties for fraud (as described in 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 1010) on key PHA forms and form letters that request information from a family or owner.

    - OHFA staff will be required to review and explain the contents of all HUD- and OHFA-required forms prior to requesting family member signatures.

    - At every regular reexamination, OHFA staff will explain any changes in HUD regulations or OHFA policy that affect program participants.

    - OHFA will require first-time owners (or their agents) to participate in a briefing session on HAP contract requirements.

    - OHFA will provide owners with ongoing information about the program, with an emphasis on actions and situations to avoid.

    - OHFA will provide each employee with the necessary training on program rules and the organization's standards of conduct and ethics.

14-I.B. DETECTING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE

In addition to taking steps to prevent errors and program abuse, OHFA will use a variety of activities to detect errors and program abuse.

Quality Control and Analysis of Data

Under the Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP), HUD requires OHFA to review a random sample of tenant records annually to determine if the records conform to program requirements and to conduct quality control inspections of a sample of units to ensure HQS compliance [24 CFR, Part 985]. (See Chapter 16 for additional information about SEMAP requirements).

In addition to the SEMAP quality control requirements, OHFA will employ a variety of methods to detect errors and program abuse.

OHFA routinely will use available sources of up-front income verification, including HUD's EIV system, to compare with family-provided information.

At each annual reexamination, current information provided by the family will be compared to information provided at the last annual reexamination to identify inconsistencies and incomplete information.

OHFA will compare family-reported income and expenditures to detect possible unreported income.

Independent Audits and HUD Monitoring

OMB Circular A-133 requires all PHAs that expend $500,000 or more in federal awards annually to have an independent audit (IPA). In addition, HUD conducts periodic on-site and automated monitoring of OHFA activities and notifies OHFA of errors and potential cases of program abuse.

OHFA will use the results reported in any IPA or HUD monitoring reports to identify potential program abuses as well as to assess the effectiveness of OHFA's error detection and abuse prevention efforts.

Individual Reporting of Possible Errors and Program Abuse

OHFA will encourage staff, program participants, and the public to report possible program abuse.

14-I.C. INVESTIGATING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE

When OHFA Will Investigate

OHFA will review all referrals, specific allegations, complaints, and tips from any source including other agencies, companies, and individuals, to determine if they warrant investigation. In order for OHFA to investigate, the allegation must contain at least one independently verifiable item of information, such as the name of an employer or the name of an unauthorized household member.

OHFA will investigate inconsistent information related to the family that is identified through file reviews and the verification process.

Consent to Release of Information [24 CFR 982.516]

OHFA may investigate possible instances of error or abuse using all available OHFA and public records. If necessary, OHFA will require HCV families to give consent to the release of additional information.

Analysis and Findings

OHFA will base its evaluation on a preponderance of the evidence collected during its investigation.

Preponderance of the evidence is defined as evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence that as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not. Preponderance of evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence

For each investigation, OHFA will determine (1) whether an error or program abuse has occurred, (2) whether any amount of money is owed OHFA, and (3) what corrective measures or penalties will be assessed.

Consideration of Remedies

All errors and instances of program abuse must be corrected prospectively. Whether OHFA will enforce other corrective actions and penalties depends upon the nature of the error or program abuse.

In the case of family-caused errors or program abuse, OHFA will take into consideration (1) the seriousness of the offense and the extent of participation or culpability of individual family members, (2) any special circumstances surrounding the case, (3) any mitigating circumstances related to the disability of a family member, (4) the effects of a particular remedy on family members who were not involved in the offense.

In the case of owner-caused errors or program abuse, OHFA will take into consideration (1) the seriousness of the offense, (2) the length of time since the violation has occurred, and (3) the effects of a particular remedy on family members who were not involved in the offense.

Notice and Appeals

OHFA will inform the relevant party in writing of its findings and remedies within 14 days of the conclusion of the investigation. The notice will include (1) a description of the error or program abuse, (2) the basis on which OHFA determined the error or program abuses, (3) the remedies to be employed, and (4) the family's right to appeal the results through the informal review or hearing process, if applicable (see Chapter 16).

PART II: CORRECTIVE MEASURES AND PENALTIES

14-II.A. SUBSIDY UNDER OR OVERPAYMENTS

A subsidy under- or overpayment includes (1) an incorrect housing assistance payment to the owner, (2) an incorrect family share established for the family, and (3) an incorrect utility reimbursement to a family.

Corrections

Whether the incorrect subsidy determination is an overpayment or underpayment of subsidy, Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) must promptly correct the HAP, family share, and any utility reimbursement prospectively.

Increases in the family share will be implemented only after the family has received 30 days notice.

Any decreases in family share will become effective the first of the month following the discovery of the error.

Reimbursement

Whether the family or owner is required to reimburse OHFA or OHFA is required to make retroactive subsidy payments to the owner or family depends upon which party is responsible for the incorrect subsidy payment and whether the action taken was an error or program abuse. Policies regarding reimbursement are discussed in the three sections that follow.

14-II.B. FAMILY-CAUSED ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE

Family obligations and general administrative requirements for participating in the program are discussed throughout this plan. This section deals specifically with errors and program abuse by family members.

An incorrect subsidy determination caused by a family generally would be the result of incorrect reporting of family composition, income, assets, or expenses, but also would include instances in which the family knowingly allows OHFA to use incorrect information provided by a third party.

Family Reimbursement to OHFA [HCV GB pp. 22-12 to 22-13]

In the case of family-caused errors or program abuse, the family will be required to repay any excess subsidy received. OHFA may, but is not required to, offer the family a repayment agreement in accordance with Chapter 16. If the family fails to repay the excess subsidy, OHFA will terminate the family's assistance in accordance with the policies in Chapter 12.

OHFA Reimbursement to Family [HCV GB p. 22-12]

OHFA will not reimburse the family for any underpayment of assistance when the underpayment clearly is caused by the family.

Prohibited Actions

An applicant or participant in the HCV program must not knowingly:

- Make a false statement to OHFA [Title 18 U.S.C. Section 1001].
- Commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program [24 CFR 982.552(c)(iv)].

Any of the following will be considered evidence of family program abuse:

Payment to the owner in excess of amounts authorized by OHFA for rent, security deposit, and additional services

Offering bribes or illegal gratuities to OHFA Board of Trustees, employees, contractors, or other OHFA representatives

Offering payments or other incentives to the owner or a third party as an inducement for the third party to make false or misleading statements to OHFA on the family's behalf

Use of a false name or the use of falsified, forged, or altered documents

Intentional misreporting of family information or circumstances (e.g. income, family composition)

Omitted facts that were obviously known by a family member (e.g., not reporting employment income)

Admission of program abuse by an adult family member

OHFA may determine other actions to be program abuse based upon a preponderance of the evidence, as defined earlier in this chapter.

Penalties for Program Abuse

In the case of program abuse caused by a family OHFA may, at its discretion, impose any of the following remedies.

- OHFA may require the family to repay excess subsidy amounts paid by OHFA, as described earlier in this section.
- OHFA may require, as a condition of receiving or continuing assistance, that a culpable family member not reside in the unit. See policies in Chapter 3 (for applicants) and Chapter 12 (for participants).
- OHFA may deny or terminate the family's assistance following the policies set forth in Chapter 3 and Chapter 12 respectively.
- OHFA may refer the family for state or federal criminal prosecution as described in section 14-II.E.

14-II.C. OWNER-CAUSED ERROR OR PROGRAM ABUSE

Owner requirements that are part of the regular process of offering, leasing, and maintaining a unit (e.g., HQS compliance, fair housing) are addressed in the appropriate chapters of this plan. This section focuses on errors and program abuse by owners.

An incorrect subsidy determination caused by an owner generally would be the result of an incorrect owner statement about the characteristics of the assisted unit (e.g., the number of bedrooms, which utilities are paid by the family). It also includes accepting duplicate housing assistance payments for the same unit in the same month, or after a family no longer resides in the unit.

Owner Reimbursement to OHFA

In all cases of overpayment of subsidy caused by the owner, the owner must repay to OHFA any excess subsidy received. OHFA may recover overpaid amounts by withholding housing assistance payments due for subsequent months, or if the debt is large, OHFA may allow the owner to pay in installments over a period of time [HCV GB p. 22-13].

In cases where the owner has received excess subsidy, OHFA will require the owner to repay the amount owed in accordance with the policies in Section 16-IV.B.

Prohibited Owner Actions

An owner participating in the HCV program must not:

- Make any false statement to OHFA [Title 18 U.S.C. Section 1001].
- Commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program [24 CFR 982.453(a)(3)] including:

Any of the following will be considered evidence of owner program abuse:

Charging the family rent above or below the amount specified by OHFA

Charging a security deposit other than that specified in the family's lease

Charging the family for services that are provided to unassisted tenants at no extra charge

Knowingly accepting housing assistance payments for any month(s) after the family has vacated the unit

Knowingly accepting incorrect or excess housing assistance payments

Offering bribes or illegal gratuities to OHFA Board of Trustees, employees, contractors, or other OHFA representatives

Offering payments or other incentives to an HCV family as an inducement for the family to make false or misleading statements to OHFA

Residing in the unit with an assisted family

Committing sexual or other harassment, either quid pro quo or hostile environment, based on the protected classes in Chapter 2

Retaliating against any applicant or participant reporting/alleging sexual or other harassment, either quid pro quo or hostile environment based on the protected classes defined in Chapter 2

Remedies and Penalties

When OHFA determines that the owner has committed program abuse, OHFA may take any of the following actions:

- Require the owner to repay excess housing assistance payments, as discussed earlier in this section and in accordance with the policies in Chapter 16.
- Terminate the HAP contract (See Chapter 13).
- Bar the owner from future participation in any OHFA programs.
- Refer the case to state or federal officials for criminal prosecution as described in section 14-II.E.

14-II.D. OHFA-CAUSED ERRORS OR PROGRAM ABUSE

The responsibilities and expectations of OHFA staff with respect to normal program administration are discussed throughout this plan. This section specifically addresses actions of an OHFA staff member that are considered errors or program abuse related to the HCV program. Additional standards of conduct may be provided in OHFA's personnel policy.

OHFA-caused incorrect subsidy determinations include (1) failing to correctly apply HCV rules regarding family composition, income, assets, and expenses, (2) assigning the incorrect voucher size to a family, and (3) errors in calculation.

De Minimis Errors [24 CFR 5.609(c)(4)]

OHFA will not be considered out of compliance when making annual income determinations solely due to de minimis errors in calculating family income. A de minimis error is an error where OHFA determination of family income deviates from the correct income determination by no more than $30 per month in monthly adjusted income ($360 in annual adjusted income) per family.

OHFA must take corrective action to credit or repay a family if the family was overcharged rent, including when OHFA make de minimis errors in the income determination. Families will not be required to repay OHFA in instances where the OHFA miscalculated income resulting in a family being undercharged for rent. OHFA state in their policies how they will repay or credit a family the amount they were overcharged as a result of the OHFA's de minimis error in income determination.

OHFA will reimburse a family for any family overpayment of rent, regardless of whether the overpayment was the result of staff-caused error, staff program abuse, or a de minimis error.

Repayment to OHFA

Neither a family nor an owner is required to repay an overpayment of subsidy if the error or program abuse is caused by OHFA staff [HCV GB. 22-12].

OHFA Reimbursement to Family or Owner

OHFA must reimburse a family for any underpayment of subsidy, regardless of whether the underpayment was the result of staff-caused error or staff or owner program abuse. Funds for this reimbursement must come from OHFA's administrative fee reserves [HCV GB p. 22-12].

Prohibited Activities

Any of the following will be considered evidence of program abuse by OHFA staff:

Failing to comply with any HCV program requirements for personal gain

Failing to comply with any HCV program requirements as a result of a conflict of interest relationship with any applicant, participant, or owner

Seeking or accepting anything of material value from applicants, participating families, vendors, owners, contractors, or other persons who provide services or materials to OHFA

Disclosing confidential or proprietary information to outside parties

Gaining profit as a result of insider knowledge of OHFA activities, policies, or practices

Misappropriating or misusing HCV funds

Destroying, concealing, removing, or inappropriately using any records related to the HCV program

Committing any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program

14-II.E. CRIMINAL PROSECUTION

When OHFA determines that program abuse by an owner, family, or OHFA staff member has occurred and the amount of overpaid subsidy meets or exceeds the threshold for prosecution under local or state law, OHFA will refer the matter to the appropriate entity for prosecution. When the amount of overpaid assistance meets or exceeds the federal threshold, the case will also be referred to the HUD Office of Inspector General (OIG).

Other criminal violations related to the HCV program will be referred to the appropriate local, state, or federal entity.

14-II.F. FRAUD AND PROGRAM ABUSE RECOVERIES

OHFA may retain a portion of program fraud losses that OHFA recovers from a family or owner through litigation, court order, or a repayment agreement [24 CFR 982.163].

OHFA must be the principal party initiating or sustaining the action to recover amounts due from tenants that are due as a result of fraud and abuse. 24 CFR 792.202 permits OHFA to retain the greater of:

- 50 percent of the amount it actually collects from a judgment, litigation (including settlement of a lawsuit) or an administrative repayment agreement, or
- Reasonable and necessary costs that OHFA incurs related to the collection including costs of investigation, legal fees, and agency collection fees.

The family must be afforded the opportunity for an informal hearing in accordance with requirements in 24 CFR 982.555.

If HUD incurs costs on behalf of OHFA related to the collection, these costs must be deducted from the amount retained by OHFA.

RESERVED

Chapter 15

SPECIAL HOUSING TYPES

[24 CFR 982 Subpart M]

INTRODUCTION

Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) is not required to permit families receiving assistance in its jurisdiction to use special housing types. However, may permit a family to use special housing types discussed in this chapter, if needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability. OHFA may also limit the number of families who receive housing choice voucher (HCV) assistance for any or all of the housing types discussed in this chapter. OHFA receives no special funding for special housing types.

OHFA may permit the following special housing types: Congregate Housing, Group Homes, Manufactured Homes, Homeownership.

This chapter consists of the following four parts. Each part contains a description of the housing type and any special requirements associated with it. Except as modified by this chapter, the general requirements of the HCV program apply to special housing types.

Part I: Congregate Housing

Part II: Group Homes

Part III: Manufactured Homes (OHFA will not provide assistance to families who own the Manufactured Home but leases the space)

Part IV: Homeownership

PART I: CONGREGATE HOUSING

[24 CFR 982.606 through 982.609]

15-I.A. OVERVIEW

Congregate housing is intended for use by elderly persons or persons with disabilities. A congregate housing facility contains a shared central kitchen and dining area and a private living area for the individual household that includes at least a living room, bedroom, and bathroom. Food service for residents must be provided.

If approved by OHFA, a family member or live-in aide may reside with the elderly person or person with disabilities. OHFA must approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

When providing HCV assistance in congregate housing, a separate lease and HAP contract are executed for each assisted family. The standard form of the HAP contract is used(form HUD-52641) with the special housing type specified in Part A of the HAP contract, as follows: "This HAP contract is used for the following special housing type under HUD regulations for the Section 8 voucher program: Congregate Housing.".

15-I.B. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE, AND HAP CALCULATION

The payment standard for an individual unit in a congregate housing facility is based on the number of rooms in the private living area for the assisted family. If there is only one room in the unit (not including the bathroom or the kitchen, if a kitchen is provided), OHFA must use the payment standard for a 0-bedroom unit. If the unit has two or more rooms (other than the bathroom and the kitchen), OHFA must use the 1-bedroom payment standard.

The HAP for an assisted occupant in a congregate housing facility is the lower of the applicable payment standard minus the TTP or the gross rent for the unit minus the TTP.

The gross rent for the unit for the purpose of calculating HCV assistance is the shelter portion (including utilities) of the resident's monthly housing expense only. The residents' costs for food service should not be included in the rent for a congregate housing unit.

15-I.C. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

HQS requirements as described in Chapter 8 apply to congregate housing except for the requirements stated below.

Congregate housing must have a refrigerator of appropriate size in the private living area of each resident; a central kitchen and dining facilities located within the premises and accessible to the residents, and food service for the residents, that is not provided by the residents themselves.

The congregate housing must contain adequate facilities and services for the sanitary disposal of food waste and refuse, including the facilities for temporary storage where necessary.

The housing quality standards applicable to lead-based paint do not apply unless a child under the age of six is expected to reside in the unit.

PART II: GROUP HOME

[24 CFR 982.610 through 982.614 and HCV GB p. 7-4]

15-II.A. OVERVIEW

A group home is a state-licensed facility intended for occupancy by elderly persons and/or persons with disabilities. Except for live-in aides, all persons living in a group home, whether assisted or not, must be elderly persons or persons with disabilities. Persons living in a group home must not require continuous medical or nursing care.

A group home consists of bedrooms for residents, which can be shared by no more than two people, and a living room, kitchen, dining area, bathroom, and other appropriate social, recreational, or community space that may be shared with other residents.

No more than 12 persons may reside in a group home including assisted and unassisted residents and any live-in aides.

If approved by OHFA, a live-in aide may live in the group home with a person with disabilities. OHFA must approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

When providing HCV assistance in a group home, a separate lease and HAP contract is executed for each assisted family. The Standard form of the HAP contract is used(form HUD-52641) with the special housing type specified in Part A of the HAP contract, as follows: "This HAP contract is used for the following special housing type under HUD regulations for the Section 8 voucher program: Congregate Housing.".

15-II.B. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE, AND HAP CALCULATION

Unless there is a live-in aide, the family unit size for an assisted occupant of a group home must be 0- or 1-bedroom, depending on OHFA's subsidy standard. If there is a live-in aide, the aide must be counted in determining the household's unit size.

The payment standard used to calculate the HAP is the lower of the payment standard for the family unit size or the pro rata share of the payment standard for the group home size. The pro rata share is calculated by dividing the number of persons in the assisted household by the number of persons (assisted and unassisted) living in the group home. The number of persons in the assisted household equals one assisted person plus an OHFA approved live -in aide.

The HAP for an assisted occupant in a group home is the lower of the payment standard minus the TTP or the gross rent minus the TTP.

The utility allowance for an assisted occupant in a group home is the pro rata share of the family unit size to the utility allowance for the group home.

The rents paid for participants residing in group homes are subject to generally applicable standards for rent reasonableness. The rent for an assisted person must not exceed the pro rata portion of the reasonable rent for the group home. In determining reasonable rent, OHFA should consider whether sanitary facilities and facilities for food preparation and service are common facilities or private facilities.

15-II.C. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

The entire unit must comply with HQS requirements described in Chapter 8 except for the requirements stated below.

- *Sanitary Facilities*: A group home must have at least one bathroom in the facility, with a flush toilet that can be used in privacy, a fixed basin with hot and cold running water, and a shower or bathtub with hot and cold running water. A group home may contain private or common bathrooms. However, no more than four residents can be required to share a bathroom.

- *Food Preparation and Service*: Group home units must contain a kitchen and dining area with adequate space to store, prepare, and serve food. The facilities for food preparation and service may be private or may be shared by the residents. The kitchen must contain a range, an oven, a refrigerator, and a sink with hot and cold running water. The sink must drain into an approvable public or private disposal system.
- *Space and Security*: Group homes must contain at least one bedroom of appropriate size for every two people, and a living room, kitchen, dining area, bathroom, and other appropriate

social, recreational, or community space that may be shared with other residents. Doors and windows accessible from outside the unit must be lockable.

- *Structure and Material*: To avoid any threat to the health and safety of the residents, group homes must be structurally sound. Elevators must be in good condition. Group homes must be accessible to and usable by residents with disabilities.
- *Site and Neighborhood*: Group homes must be located in a residential setting. The site and neighborhood should be reasonably free from disturbing noises and reverberations, and other hazards to the health, safety, and general welfare of the residents, and should not be subject to serious adverse conditions, such as:
  - Dangerous walks or steps
  - Instability
  - Flooding, poor drainage
  - Septic tank back-ups
  - Sewage hazards
  - Mud slides
  - Abnormal air pollution
  - Smoke or dust
  - Excessive noise
  - Vibrations or vehicular traffic
  - Excessive accumulations of trash
  - Vermin or rodent infestation, and
  - Fire hazards.

The housing quality standards applicable to lead-based paint do not apply unless a child under the age of six is expected to reside in the unit.

PART III: MANUFACTURED HOMES

[24 CFR 982.620 through 982.624]

15-III.A. OVERVIEW

A manufactured home is a manufactured structure, transportable in one or more parts, which is built on a permanent chassis, and designed for use as a principal place of residence. HCV-assisted families may occupy manufactured homes in two different ways.

(1) A family can choose to rent a manufactured home already installed on a space and OHFA must permit it. In this instance program rules are the same as when a family rents any other residential housing, except that there are special HQS requirements as provided in 15-III.B below.

(2) OHFA will not provide assistance to a family who owns a manufactured home but leases the space.

15-III.B. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

The manufactured home must meet all HQS performance requirements and acceptability criteria discussed in Chapter 8 of this plan. In addition, the following requirement applies:

Manufactured Home Tie-Down

A manufactured home must be placed on the site in a stable manner, and must be free from hazards such as sliding or wind damage. The home must be securely anchored by a tie-down device that distributes and transfers the loads imposed by the unit to appropriate ground anchors to resist overturning and sliding.

PART IV: HOMEOWNERSHIP

[24 CFR 982.625 through 982.643]

15-IV.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR 982.625]

The homeownership option is used to assist a family residing in a home purchased and owned by one or more members of the family. A family assisted under this option may be newly admitted or an existing participant in the HCV program. OHFA must have the capacity to operate a successful HCV homeownership program as defined by the regulations.

There are two forms of homeownership assistance. Monthly homeownership assistance payments or a single down payment assistance grant. OHFA will only offer monthly homeownership assistance payments.

It is the sole responsibility of OHFA to determine whether it is reasonable to implement a homeownership program as a reasonable accommodation. OHFA must determine what is reasonable based on the specific circumstances and individual needs of the person with a disability. OHFA may determine that it is not reasonable to offer homeownership assistance as a reasonable accommodation in cases where OHFA has otherwise opted not to implement a homeownership program.

OHFA must approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

15-IV.B. FAMILY ELIGIBILITY [24 CFR 982.627]

The family must meet all of the requirements listed below before the commencement of homeownership assistance. OHFA may also establish additional initial requirements as long as they are described in OHFA's administrative plan.

- The family must have been admitted to the Housing Choice Voucher program.
- The family must qualify as a first-time homeowner, or may be a cooperative member.
- The family must meet the Federal minimum income requirement. The family must have a gross annual income equal to the Federal minimum wage multiplied by 2000, based on the income of adult family members who will own the home. OHFA may establish a higher income standard for families. However, a family that meets the federal minimum income requirement (but not OHFA's requirement) will be considered to meet the minimum income requirement if it can demonstrate that it has been pre-qualified or pre-approved for financing that is sufficient to purchase an eligible unit.
- For disabled families, the minimum income requirement is equal to the current SSI monthly payment for an individual living alone, multiplied by 12.
- For elderly or disabled families, welfare assistance payments for adult family members who will own the home will be included in determining whether the family meets the minimum income requirement. It will not be included for other families.
- The family must satisfy the employment requirements by demonstrating that one or more adult members of the family who will own the home at commencement of homeownership assistance is currently employed on a full-time basis (the term 'full-time employment' means not less than an average of 30 hours per week); and has been continuously so employed during the year before commencement of homeownership assistance for the family.
- The employment requirement does not apply to elderly and disabled families. In addition, if a family, other than an elderly or disabled family includes a person with disabilities, OHFA must grant an exemption from the employment requirement if OHFA determines that it is needed as a reasonable accommodation.
- The family has not defaulted on a mortgage securing debt to purchase a home under the homeownership option
- Except for cooperative members who have acquired cooperative membership shares prior to commencement of homeownership assistance, no family member has a present ownership interest in a residence at the commencement of homeownership assistance for the purchase of any home.
- Except for cooperative members who have acquired cooperative membership shares prior to the commencement of homeownership assistance, the family has entered a contract of sale in accordance with 24 CFR 982.631(c).

15-IV.C. SELECTION OF FAMILIES [24 CFR 982.626]

Unless otherwise provided (under the homeownership option), OHFA may limit homeownership assistance to families or purposes defined by OHFA, and may prescribe additional requirements for commencement of homeownership assistance for a family. Any such limits or additional requirements must be described in OHFA's administrative plan.

Applicants on OHFA's Section 8 HCV waiting list will not be allowed to move directly from the waiting list into homeownership. Applicants will be required to participate in OHFA's Section 8 HCV program for a minimum of one year before they are eligible to apply for the homeownership program.

A family within the initial 1-year period of a lease and HAP contract will not be allowed to participate in the homeownership program until the expiration of the lease or the family obtains a release from their obligations under the lease from the current property owner/landlord.

A family with an outstanding debt to OHFA or another PHA will not be allowed to participate in the homeownership program.

Families applying for assistance under OHFA's homeownership program must:

- Be currently enrolled in OHFA's Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program and in compliance with the FSS contract; or
- The Individual Training and Service Plan (ITSP) goals *must* include homeownership and employment.

If OHFA limits the number of families that may participate in the homeownership option, OHFA must establish a system by which to select families to participate.

OHFA limits homeownership participation to a maximum of 600 families at any given time. Families are selected for participation on a first-come, first-served basis.

15-IV.D. ELIGIBLE UNITS [24 CFR 982.628]

In order for a unit to be eligible, OHFA must determine that the unit satisfies all of the following requirements:

- The unit must meet HUD's "eligible housing" requirements. The unit may not be any of the following:
  - A public housing or Indian housing unit;
  - A unit receiving Section 8 project-based assistance;

- A nursing home, board and care home, or facility providing continual psychiatric, medical or nursing services;
- A college or other school dormitory;
- On the grounds of penal, reformatory, medical, mental, or similar public or private institutions.

- The unit must be under construction or already exist at the time the family enters into the contract of sale.
- The unit must be a one-unit property or a single dwelling unit in a cooperative or condominium.
- The unit must have been inspected by OHFA and by an independent inspector designated by the family.
- The unit must meet Housing Quality Standards (see Chapter 8).
- For a unit where the family will not own fee title to the real property (such as a manufactured home), the home must have a permanent foundation and the family must have the right to occupy the site for at least 40 years.

OHFA must not approve the unit if OHFA has been informed that the seller is debarred, suspended, or subject to a limited denial of participation.

15-IV.E. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SEARCH AND PURCHASE [24 CFR 982.629]

It is the family's responsibility to find a home that meets the criteria for voucher homeownership assistance. OHFA may establish the maximum time that will be allowed for a family to locate and purchase a home, and may require the family to report on their progress in finding and purchasing a home. If the family is unable to purchase a home within the maximum time established by OHFA, OHFA may issue the family a voucher to lease a unit or place the family's name on the waiting list for a voucher, if the family remains eligible.

The family's deadline date for locating a home to purchase will be 12 months from the date the family's eligibility for the homeownership option is determined. If the family wishes to receive another homeownership voucher, the family must complete another Homebuyer Education class.

OHFA will require periodic reports on the family's progress in finding and purchasing a home. Such reports will be provided by the family every 90 days.

15-IV.F. HOMEOWNERSHIP COUNSELING [24 CFR 982.630]

Before commencement of homeownership assistance for a family, the family must attend and satisfactorily complete the pre-assistance homeownership and housing counseling program required by OHFA. HUD suggests the following topics for OHFA-required pre-assistance counseling:

- Home maintenance (including care of the grounds);
- Budgeting and money management;
- Credit counseling;
- How to negotiate the purchase price of a home;
- How to obtain homeownership financing and loan pre-approvals, including a description of types of financing that may be available, and the pros and cons of different types of financing;
- How to find a home, including information about homeownership opportunities, schools, and transportation in OHFA's jurisdiction;
- Advantages of purchasing a home in an area that does not have a high concentration of low-income families and how to locate homes in such areas;
- Information on fair housing, including fair housing lending and local fair housing enforcement agencies; and
- Information about the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (12 U.S.C. 2601 et seq.) (RESPA), state and Federal truth-in-lending laws, and how to identify and avoid loans with oppressive terms and conditions.

OHFA may adapt the subjects covered in pre-assistance counseling (as listed) to local circumstances and the needs of individual families.

OHFA may offer additional counseling after commencement of homeownership assistance (ongoing counseling). If OHFA offers a program of ongoing counseling for participants in the homeownership option, OHFA shall have discretion to determine whether the family is required to participate in the ongoing counseling.

OHFA will use a HUD-approved housing counseling agency to provide the counseling.

15-IV.G. HOME INSPECTIONS, CONTRACT OF SALE, AND PHA DISAPPROVAL OF SELLER [24 CFR 982.631]

Home Inspections

OHFA may not commence monthly homeownership assistance payments or provide down payment assistance grants for a family until OHFA has inspected the unit and has determined that the unit passes HQS.

An independent professional inspector selected by and paid for by the family must also inspect the unit. The independent inspection must cover major building systems and components, including foundation and structure, housing interior and exterior, and the roofing, plumbing, electrical, and heating systems. The independent inspector must be qualified to report on property conditions, including major building systems and components.

OHFA may not require the family to use an independent inspector selected by OHFA. The independent inspector may not be an OHFA employee or contractor, or other person under control of OHFA. OHFA requires that independent inspectors meet FHA qualifications.

Copies of the independent inspection report will be provided to the family and OHFA. Based on the information in this report, the family and OHFA will determine whether any pre-purchase repairs are necessary.

OHFA may disapprove a unit for assistance based on information in the independent inspector's report, even if the unit was found to comply with HQS.

Contract of Sale

Before commencement of monthly homeownership assistance payments or receipt of a down payment assistance grant, a member or members of the family must enter into a contract of sale with the seller of the unit to be acquired by the family. The family must give OHFA a copy of the contract of sale. The contract of sale must:

- Specify the price and other terms of sale by the seller to the purchaser;
- Provide that the purchaser will arrange for a pre-purchase inspection of the dwelling unit by an independent inspector selected by the purchaser;
- Provide that the purchaser is not obligated to purchase the unit unless the inspection is satisfactory to the purchaser;
- Provide that the purchaser is not obligated to pay for any necessary repairs; and
- Contain a certification from the seller that the seller has not been debarred, suspended, or subject to a limited denial of participation under CFR part 24.

Disapproval of a Seller

In its administrative discretion, OHFA may deny approval of a seller for the same reasons OHFA may disapprove an owner under the regular HCV program [see 24 CFR 982.306(c)].

15-IV.H. FINANCING [24 CFR 982.625, 24 CFR 982.632]

OHFA may establish requirements for financing purchase of a home under the homeownership option. This may include requirements concerning qualification of lenders, terms of financing, restrictions concerning debt secured by the home, lender qualifications, loan terms, and affordability of the debt. OHFA must establish policies describing these requirements in the administrative plan.

OHFA may not require that families acquire financing from one or more specified lenders, thereby restricting the family's ability to secure favorable financing terms.

The family is responsible for securing financing. OHFA has established financing requirements that are listed below and may disapprove proposed financing if OHFA determines that the debt is unaffordable. OHFA requires that financing for purchase of a home under its Section 8 homeownership program:

(i) Be provided, insured, or guaranteed by the state or Federal government;

(ii) Comply with secondary mortgage market underwriting requirements; or

(iii) Comply with generally accepted private sector underwriting standards.

OHFA will prohibit the following forms of financing:

- balloon payment mortgages
- variable interest rate loans
- loans with an interest rate above 10%

OHFA will require a minimum homeowner down payment requirement of 3 percent of the purchase price that includes a minimum cash down payment of 1percent to be paid from the family's own resources.

Families purchasing a home through the HCV Homeownership Program will be encouraged to purchase Mortgage Cancellation Insurance (Credit Life Insurance) or a term life insurance policy to pay the balance of the mortgage in the event of the homeowner's death.

Families will be required to purchase a homeowner's warranty.

15-IV.I. CONTINUED ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS; FAMILY OBLIGATIONS [24 CFR 982.633]

Homeownership assistance may only be paid while the family is residing in the home. If the family moves out of the home, OHFA may not continue homeownership assistance after the

month when the family moves out. The family or lender is not required to refund to OHFA the homeownership assistance for the month when the family moves out.

Before commencement of homeownership assistance, the family must execute a statement in which the family agrees to comply with all family obligations under the homeownership option.

The family must comply with the following obligations:

- The family must comply with the terms of the mortgage securing debt incurred to purchase the home, or any refinancing of such debt.
- The family may not convey or transfer ownership of the home, except for purposes of financing, refinancing, or pending settlement of the estate of a deceased family member. Use and occupancy of the home are subject to 24 CFR 982.551 (h) and (i).
- The family must supply information to OHFA or HUD as specified in 24 CFR 982.551(b). The family must further supply any information required by OHFA or HUD concerning mortgage financing or refinancing, sale, or transfer of any interest in the home, or homeownership expenses.
- The family must notify OHFA before moving out of the home.
- The family must provide the OHFA with information on any satisfaction or payment of the mortgage debt.
- The family must notify OHFA if the family defaults on the mortgage used to purchase the home.
- No family member may have any ownership interest in any other residential property.
- The family must attend and complete ongoing homeownership counseling.
- The home must pass a HUD Housing Quality Standards inspection prior to commencement of the homeownership contract.
- The family may obtain a second mortgage on the home.
- The family must supply required information to OHFA.
- The family must comply with the obligations of a participant family described in 24 CFR 982.551, except for the following provisions which do not apply to assistance under the homeownership option: 24 CFR 982.551(c), (d), (e), (f), (g) and (j).

15-IV.J. MAXIMUM TERM OF HOMEOWNER ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.634]

Except in the case of a family that qualifies as an elderly or disabled family, other family members (described below) shall not receive homeownership assistance for more than:

- Fifteen years, if the initial mortgage incurred to finance purchase of the home has a term of 20 years or longer; or
- Ten years, in all other cases.

The maximum term described above applies to any member of the family who:

- Has an ownership interest in the unit during the time that homeownership payments are made; or
- Is the spouse of any member of the household who has an ownership interest in the unit during the time homeownership payments are made.

In the case of an elderly family, the exception only applies if the family qualifies as an elderly family at the start of homeownership assistance. In the case of a disabled family, the exception applies if at any time during receipt of homeownership assistance the family qualifies as a disabled family.

If, during the course of homeownership assistance, the family ceases to qualify as a disabled or elderly family, the maximum term becomes applicable from the date homeownership assistance commenced. However, such a family must be provided at least 6 months of homeownership assistance after the maximum term becomes applicable (provided the family is otherwise eligible to receive homeownership assistance).

If the family has received such assistance for different homes, or from different PHAs, the total of such assistance terms is subject to the maximum term described in this part.

15-IV.K. HOMEOWNERSHIP ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS AND HOMEOWNERSHIP EXPENSES [24 CFR 982.635]

The monthly homeownership assistance payment is the lower of: the voucher payment standard minus the total tenant payment, or the monthly homeownership expenses minus the total tenant payment.

In determining the amount of the homeownership assistance payment, OHFA will use the same payment standard schedule, payment standard amounts, and subsidy standards as those described elsewhere in this plan for the Housing Choice Voucher program.

OHFA may pay the homeownership assistance payments directly to the family, or at OHFA's discretion, to a lender on behalf of the family. If the assistance payment exceeds the amount due to the lender, OHFA must pay the excess directly to the family.

Homeownership assistance for a family terminates automatically 180 calendar days after the last homeownership assistance payment on behalf of the family. However, OHFA may grant relief from this requirement in those cases where automatic termination would result in extreme hardship for the family.

OHFA must adopt policies for determining the amount of homeownership expenses to be allowed by OHFA in accordance with HUD requirements.

Homeownership expenses (not including cooperatives) only include amounts allowed by OHFA to cover:

- Principal and interest on initial mortgage debt, any refinancing of such debt, and any mortgage insurance premium incurred to finance purchase of the home;
- Real estate taxes and public assessments on the home;
- Home insurance;
- OHFA allowance for maintenance expenses; (1% of the purchase price, applied annually)
- OHFA allowance for costs of major repairs and replacements; (1% of the purchase price, applied annually)
- OHFA utility allowance for the home;
- Principal and interest on mortgage debt incurred to finance costs for major repairs, replacements, or improvements for the home. If a member of the family is a person with disabilities, such debt may include debt incurred by the family to finance costs needed to make the home accessible for such person, if OHFA determines that allowance of such costs as homeownership expenses is needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the homeownership option is readily accessible to and usable by such person;
- Land lease payments where a family does not own fee title to the real property on which the home is located; [see 24 CFR 982.628(b)].
- For a condominium unit, condominium operating charges or maintenance fees assessed by the condominium homeowner association.

Homeownership expenses for a cooperative member include amounts allowed by OHFA to cover:

- The cooperative charge under the cooperative occupancy agreement including payment for real estate taxes and public assessments on the home;
- Principal and interest on initial debt incurred to finance purchase of cooperative membership shares and any refinancing of such debt;
- Home insurance;
- OHFA allowance for maintenance expenses;
- OHFA allowance for costs of major repairs and replacements;
- OHFA utility allowance for the home; and
- Principal and interest on debt incurred to finance major repairs, replacements, or improvements for the home. If a member of the family is a person with disabilities, such debt may include debt incurred by the family to finance costs needed to make the home accessible for such person, if OHFA determines that allowance of such costs as homeownership

expenses is needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the homeownership option is readily accessible to and usable by such person.

- Cooperative operating charges or maintenance fees assessed by the cooperative homeowner association.

15-IV.L. PORTABILITY [24 CFR 982.636, 982.637, 982.353(b) and (c), 982.552, 982.553]

Subject to the restrictions on portability included in HUD regulations and OHFA policies, a family may exercise portability if the receiving PHA is administering a voucher homeownership program and accepting new homeownership families. The receiving PHA may absorb the family into its voucher program, or bill the initial PHA.

The family must attend the briefing and counseling sessions required by the receiving PHA. The receiving PHA will determine whether the financing for, and the physical condition of the unit, are acceptable. The receiving PHA must promptly notify the initial PHA if the family has purchased an eligible unit under the program, or if the family is unable to purchase a home within the maximum time established by OHFA.

15-IV.M. MOVING WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.637]

A family receiving homeownership assistance may move with continued tenant-based assistance. The family may move with voucher rental assistance or with voucher homeownership assistance. Continued tenant-based assistance for a new unit cannot begin so long as any family member holds title to the prior home.

OHFA may deny permission to move to a new unit with continued voucher assistance as follows:

- Lack of funding to provide continued assistance.
- At any time, OHFA may deny permission to move with continued rental or homeownership assistance in accordance with 24 CFR 982.638, regarding denial or termination of assistance.
- In accordance with OHFA’s policy regarding number of moves within a 12-month period.

OHFA must deny the family permission to move to a new unit with continued voucher rental assistance if:

- The family defaulted on an FHA-insured mortgage; and
- The family fails to demonstrate that the family has conveyed, or will convey, title to the home, as required by HUD, to HUD or HUD's designee; and
- The family has moved, or will move, from the home within the period established or approved by HUD.

15-IV.N. DENIAL OR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.638]

At any time, OHFA may deny or terminate homeownership assistance in accordance with HCV program requirements in 24 CFR 982.552 (Grounds for denial or termination of assistance) or 24 CFR 982.553 (Crime by family members).

OHFA may also deny or terminate assistance for violation of participant obligations described in 24 CFR Parts 982.551 or 982.633 and in accordance with its own policy, with the exception of failure to meet obligations under the Family Self-Sufficiency program as prohibited under the alternative requirements set forth in FR Notice 12/29/14.

Homeownership assistance for a family automatically terminates 180 calendar days after the last homeownership assistance payment on behalf of the family. However, a PHA may grant relief from this requirement in those cases where automatic termination would result in extreme hardship for the family

OHFA must terminate voucher homeownership assistance for any member of family receiving homeownership assistance that is dispossessed from the home pursuant to a judgment or order of foreclosure on any mortgage (whether FHA insured or non-FHA) securing debt incurred to purchase the home, or any refinancing of such debt. OHFA will not permit such a family to move with continued voucher rental assistance.

RESERVED

Chapter 16

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency's (OHFA) administrative policies and practices that are relevant to the activities covered in this plan. The policies are discussed in seven parts as described below:

Part I: Administrative Fee Reserve. This part describes OHFA's policies with regard to oversight of expenditures from its administrative fee reserve.

Part II: Setting Program Standards and Schedules. This part describes what payment standards are, and how they are updated, as well as how utility allowances are established and revised.

Part III: Informal Reviews and Hearings. This part outlines the requirements and procedures for informal reviews, remote and in office hearings, and for informal hearings regarding citizenship status.

Part IV: Owner or Family Debts to OHFA. This part describes policies for recovery of monies that OHFA has overpaid on behalf of families, or to owners, and describes the circumstances under which OHFA will offer repayment agreements to owners and families. Also discussed are the consequences for failure to make payments in accordance with a repayment agreement.

Part V: Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP). This part describes what the SEMAP scores represent, how they are established, and how those scores affect OHFA.

Part VI: Record-Keeping. All aspects of the program involve certain types of record-keeping. This part outlines the privacy rights of applicants and participants and record retention policies OHFA will follow.

Part VII: Reporting and Record Keeping for Children with Elevated Blood Lead Level. This part describes OHFA's responsibilities for reporting, data collection, and record keeping relative to children with elevated blood lead levels that are less than six years of age, and are receiving HCV assistance.

Part VIII: Determination of Insufficient Funding. This part describes OHFA's policies for determining if there is sufficient funding to issue vouchers, to approve moves to higher cost units or areas, and to continue assistance for all participant families.

Part IX: Violence Against Women Act (VAWA): Notification, Documentation, Confidentiality. This part contains key terms used in VAWA and describes requirements related to notifying families and owners about their rights and responsibilities under VAWA; requesting documentation from victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking; and maintaining the confidentiality of information obtained from victims.

PART I: ADMINISTRATIVE FEE RESERVE [24 CFR 982.155]

OHFA will maintain administrative fee reserves, or unrestricted net position (UNP) formerly called unrestricted net assets (UNA) for the program to pay program administrative expenses in excess of administrative fees paid by HUD for OHFA'S fiscal year. HUD appropriations acts beginning with FFY 2004 have specified that administrative fee funding may be used only for activities related to the provision of HCV assistance, including related development activities. Notice PIH 2012-9 cites two examples of related development activities: unit modification for accessibility purposes and development of project-based voucher units. The notice makes clear that other activities may also qualify as related development activities. Administrative fees that remain in the UNP account from funding provided prior to 2004 may be used for "other housing purposes permitted by state and local law," in accordance with 24 CFR 982.155(b)(1).

If OHFA has not adequately administered its HCV program, HUD may prohibit use of funds in the UNP Account and may direct OHFA to use funds in that account to improve administration of the program, for HCV HAP expenses, or to reimburse ineligible expenses in accordance with the regulation at 24 CFR 982.155(b)(3).

HUD requires OHFA's Board of Trustees or other authorized officials to establish the maximum amount that may be charged against the UNP account without specific approval.

> Expenditures from the UNP account will be made in accordance with all applicable federal requirements. Expenditures will not exceed $25,000 per occurrence without the prior approval of OHFA's Board of Trustees.

PART II: SETTING PROGRAM STANDARDS AND SCHEDULES

16-II.A. OVERVIEW

Although many of the program's requirements are established centrally by HUD, the HCV program's regulations recognize that some flexibility is required to allow OHFA to adapt the program to local conditions. This part discusses how OHFA establishes and updates certain schedules and standards that are used to administer the program locally. Details about how these schedules are applied to individual families are provided in other chapters. The schedules and standards discussed here include:

- Payment Standards, which dictate the maximum subsidy a family can receive (application of the payment standards is discussed in Chapter 6); and
- Utility Allowances, which specify how a family's payment should be adjusted to account for tenant-paid utilities (application of utility allowances is discussed in Chapter 6).

Copies of the payment standard and utility allowance schedules are available for review at OHFA's website www.ohfa.org or in OHFA's offices during normal business hours.

OHFA will maintain documentation to support its annual review of payment standards and utility allowance schedules. This documentation will be retained for at least 3 years.

Establishing and updating OHFA's passbook rate, which is used to calculate imputed income from assets, is covered in Chapter 6 (see Section 6-I.G.).

16-II.B. PAYMENT STANDARDS [24 CFR 982.503; HCV GB, Chapter 7]

The payment standard sets the maximum subsidy payment a family can receive from OHFA each month [24 CFR 982.505(a)]. Payment standards are based on fair market rents (FMRs) published annually by HUD. FMRs are set at a percentile within the rent distribution of standard quality rental housing units in each FMR area. For most jurisdictions, FMRs are set at the 40th percentile of rents in the market area.

OHFA must establish a payment standard schedule that establishes payment standard amounts for each FMR area within OHFA's jurisdiction, and for each unit size within each of the FMR areas. For each unit size, OHFA may establish a single payment standard amount for the whole FMR area, or may set different payment standards for different parts of the FMR area. Unless HUD grants an exception, OHFA is required to establish a payment standard within a "basic range" established by HUD – between 90 and 110 percent of the published FMR for each unit size.

Updating Payment Standards

When HUD updates its FMRs, OHFA must update its payment standards if the standards are no longer within the basic range. OHFA must revise the payment standard amount no later than 3 months following the effective date of the published FMR if a change is necessary to stay within the basic range [24 CFR 982.503(b)]. HUD may require OHFA to make further adjustments if it determines that rent burdens for assisted families in OHFA's jurisdiction are unacceptably high 24 CFR 982.503(g)].

OHFA will review the appropriateness of the payment standards on an annual basis when the new FMR is published, and at other times as determined necessary. In addition to ensuring the payment standards are always within the "basic range" OHFA may consider some of the following factors when determining whether an adjustment should be made to the payment standard schedule:

Funding Availability: OHFA may review the budget to determine the impact projected subsidy adjustments will have on funding available for the program and the number of families served. OHFA may compare the number of families who

could be served under revised payment standard amounts with the number assisted under current payment standard amounts.

Rent Burden of Participating Families: Rent burden will be determined by identifying the percentage of families, for each unit size, that are paying more than 30 percent of their monthly-adjusted income as the family share. When 40 percent or more of families, for any given unit size, are paying more than 30 percent of adjusted monthly income as the family share, OHFA may consider increasing the payment standard. In evaluating rent burdens, OHFA will not include families renting a larger unit than their family unit size.

Quality of Units Selected: OHFA may review the quality of units selected by participant families when making the determination of the percent of income families are paying for housing, to ensure that payment standard increases are only made when needed to reach the mid-range of the market.

Changes in Rent to Owner: OHFA may review a sample of the units to determine how often owners are increasing or decreasing rents and the average percent of increases/decreases by bedroom size.

Unit Availability: OHFA may review the availability of units for each unit size, particularly in areas with low concentrations of poor and minority families.

Rent Comparables: OHFA may review standard rental housing comparable units to determinate current rental market rates to ensure payment standards are similar.

Lease-up Time and Success Rate: OHFA may consider the percentage of families that are unable to locate suitable housing before the voucher expires and whether families are leaving the jurisdiction to find affordable housing.

Exception Payment Standards [24 CFR 982.503(c)]

OHFA must request HUD approval to establish payment standards that are higher than the basic range. At HUD's sole discretion, HUD may approve a payment standard amount that is higher than the basic range for a designated part of the FMR area. HUD may approve an exception payment standard amount (in accordance with program requirements) for all units, or for all units of a given size, leased by program families in the exception area. Any PHA with jurisdiction in the exception area may use the HUD-approved exception payment standard amount. The total population of all HUD-approved exception areas in an FMR area may not include more than 50 percent of the population of the FMR area.

Voluntary Use of Small Area FMRs [24 CFR 982.503, Notice PIH 2018-01]

OHFA administers voucher in a metropolitan area where the adoption of small area FMRs (SAFMRs) is not required may request approval from HUD to voluntarily adopt SAFMRs. SAFMRs may be voluntarily adopted for one or more zip code areas.

OHFA will not voluntarily adopt the use of SAFMRs except to establish exception payment standards in certain zip code areas. **Unit-by-Unit Exceptions [24 CFR 982.503, 24 CFR 982.505(d), Notice PIH 2010-26]**

Unit-by-unit exceptions to OHFA's payment standards generally are not permitted. However, an exception may be made as a reasonable accommodation for a family that includes a person with disabilities. (See Chapter 2 for a discussion of reasonable accommodations.) This type of exception does not affect OHFA's payment standard schedule.

When needed as a reasonable accommodation, OHFA may make an exception to the payment standard without HUD approval, if the exception amount does not exceed the current HUD allowed percentage of the applicable FMR for the unit size [CFR 982.503(b)(1)(v)]. OHFA may request HUD approval for an exception to the payment standard for a particular family, if the required amount exceeds the current allowed percentage of the FMR that OHFA is allowed to approve [CFR 982.503(b)(1)(vi)].

A family that requires a reasonable accommodation may request a higher payment standard at the time the Scheduling Appointment Request Form (SARF) is submitted. The family must document the need for the exception. In order to approve an exception, or request an exception from HUD, OHFA must determine that:

The family will be occupying a unit that is not larger than the approved size;

There is a shortage of affordable units that would be appropriate for the family;

The family's TTP would otherwise exceed 40 percent of adjusted monthly income; and

The rent for the unit is reasonable.

"Success Rate" Payment Standard Amounts [24 CFR 982.503(e)]

If a substantial percentage of families have difficulty finding a suitable unit, OHFA may request a "success rate payment standard" that applies to the entire jurisdiction. If approved by HUD, a success rate payment standard allows OHFA to set its payment standards at 90-110 percent of a higher FMR (the 50th, rather than the 40th percentile FMR). To support the request, OHFA must demonstrate that during the most recent 6-month period for which information is available:

- Fewer than 75 percent of families who were issued vouchers became participants;
- OHFA had established payment standards for all unit sizes, and for the entire jurisdiction, at 110 percent of the published FMR; and
- OHFA had a policy of allowing voucher holders who made sustained efforts to locate units at least 90 days to search for a unit.

Although HUD approves the success rate payment standard for all unit sizes in the FMR area, OHFA may choose to adjust the payment standard for only some unit sizes in all, or a designated part, of OHFA's jurisdiction within the FMR area.

Decreases in the Payment Standard below the Basic Range [24 CFR 982.503(d)]

OHFA must request HUD approval to establish a payment standard amount that is lower than the basic range. At HUD's sole discretion, HUD may approve establishment of a payment standard lower than the basic range. HUD will not approve a lower payment standard if the family share for more than 40 percent of program participants exceeds 30 percent of adjusted monthly income.

16-II.C. UTILITY ALLOWANCES [24 CFR 982.517]

An OHFA-established utility allowance schedule is used in determining family share and OHFA's subsidy. OHFA must maintain a utility allowance schedule for (1) all tenant-paid utilities, (2) the cost of tenant-supplied refrigerators and ranges, and (3) other tenant-paid housing services such as trash collection.

The utility allowance schedule must be determined based on the typical cost of utilities and services paid by energy-conservative households that occupy housing of similar size and type in the same locality. In developing the schedule, OHFA must use normal patterns of consumption for the community as a whole, and current utility rates.

The utility allowance must include the utilities and services that are necessary in the locality to provide housing that complies with housing quality standards. Costs for telephone, cable/satellite television, and internet services are not included in the utility allowance schedule.

In the utility allowance schedule, OHFA must classify utilities and other housing services according to the following general categories: space heating; air conditioning; cooking; water heating; water; sewer; trash collection; other electric; cost of tenant-supplied refrigerator; cost of tenant-supplied range; and other specified housing services.

The cost of each utility and housing service must be stated separately by unit size and type. Chapter 18 of the HCV Guidebook provides detailed guidance to OHFA about establishing utility allowance schedules.

Air Conditioning

An allowance for air-conditioning must be provided when the majority of housing units in the market have central air-conditioning or are wired for tenant-installed air conditioners.

> OHFA has included an allowance for air-conditioning in its schedule. Central air-conditioning or a portable air conditioner must be present in a unit before OHFA will apply this allowance to a family's rent and subsidy calculations.

Reasonable Accommodation

See Chapter 2 for policies regarding the request and approval of reasonable accommodations.

Utility Allowance Revisions

OHFA must review its schedule of utility allowances each year, and must revise the schedule if there has been a change of 10 percent or more in any utility rate since the last time the allowance for that utility was revised.

OHFA must maintain information supporting its annual review of utility allowance and any revisions made in its utility allowance schedule.

PART III: INFORMAL REVIEWS AND HEARINGS

16-III.A. OVERVIEW

Both applicants and participants have the right to disagree with, and appeal, certain decisions of OHFA that may adversely affect them. OHFA decisions that may be appealed by applicants and participants are discussed in this section.

The process for applicant appeals of OHFA decisions is called the "informal review." For participants (or applicants denied admission because of citizenship issues), the appeal process is called an "informal hearing." OHFA is required to include informal review procedures for applicants and informal hearing procedures for participants in their administrative plans [24 CFR 982.54(d)(12) and (13)].

16-III.B. INFORMAL REVIEWS

Informal reviews are provided for program applicants. An applicant is someone who has applied for admission to the program, but is not yet a participant in the program. Informal reviews are intended to provide a "minimum hearing requirement" [24 CFR 982.554], and need not be as elaborate as the informal hearing requirements [Federal Register 60, no. 127 (3 July 1995): 34690].

Decisions Subject to Informal Review

OHFA must give an applicant the opportunity for an informal review of a decision denying assistance [24 CFR 982.554(a)]. Denial of assistance may include any or all of the following [24 CFR 982.552(a)(2)]:

- Denying listing on OHFA's waiting list
- Denying or withdrawing a voucher
- Refusing to enter into a HAP contract or approve a lease
- Refusing to process or provide assistance under portability procedures

Informal reviews are not required for the following reasons [24 CFR 982.554(c)]:

- Discretionary administrative determinations by OHFA
- General policy issues or class grievances
- A determination of the family unit size under OHFA subsidy standards
- OHFA determination not to approve an extension or suspension of a voucher term
- OHFA determination not to grant approval of the tenancy
- OHFA determination that the unit is not in compliance with the HQS
- OHFA determination that the unit is not in accordance with the HQS due to family size or composition

> OHFA will only offer an informal review to applicants for whom assistance is being denied. Denial of assistance includes: denying listing on OHFA's waiting list; denying or withdrawing a voucher; refusing to enter into a HAP contract or approve a lease; refusing to process or provide assistance under portability procedures.

Notice to the Applicant [24 CFR 982.554(a)]

OHFA must give an applicant prompt notice of a decision denying assistance. The notice must contain a brief statement of the reasons for OHFA's decision, and must also state that the applicant may request an informal review of the decision. The notice must describe how to obtain the informal review.

Scheduling an Informal Review

> A request for an informal review must be made in writing and delivered to OHFA either in person, electronically or by first class mail, by the close of the business day, no later than 14 days from the date of OHFA's denial of assistance.

OHFA will schedule and send written notice of the informal review to the family within 30 days of the family's request (OHFA makes every reasonable attempt to schedule informal reviews within 30 days, however, delays may occur).

Informal review will be scheduled for an in-office or remote hearing to be conducted by the hearing officer.

Informal Review Procedures [24 CFR 982.554(b)]

The informal review must be conducted by a person other than the one who made or approved the decision under review, or a subordinate of this person.

The applicant must be provided an opportunity to present written or oral objections to the decision of OHFA.

Informal Review Decision [24 CFR 982.554(b)]

OHFA must notify the applicant of OHFA's final decision, including a brief statement of the reasons for the final decision.

In rendering a decision, OHFA will evaluate the following matters:

Whether the grounds for denial were stated factually in the notice to the family.

The validity of the grounds for denial of assistance. If the grounds for denial are not specified in the regulations or OHFA policy, the decision to deny assistance will be overturned.

The validity of the evidence. OHFA will evaluate whether the facts presented prove the grounds for denial of assistance. If the facts prove that there are grounds for denial, and the denial is required by HUD, the hearing officer will uphold the decision to deny assistance.

If the facts prove the grounds for denial, and the denial is discretionary, OHFA will consider the recommendation of the person conducting the informal review in making the final decision whether to deny assistance.

OHFA will notify the applicant of the final decision within 14 days of concluding the informal review.

If the decision to deny is overturned as a result of the informal review, processing for admission will resume.

16-III.C. INFORMAL HEARINGS FOR PARTICIPANTS [24 CFR 982.555]

OHFA must offer an informal hearing for certain OHFA determinations relating to the individual circumstances of a participant family. A participant is defined as a family that has been admitted to OHFA's HCV program and is currently assisted in the program. The purpose of the informal hearing is to consider whether OHFA's decisions related to the family's circumstances are in accordance with the law, HUD regulations, and OHFA policies.

OHFA is not permitted to terminate a family's assistance until the time allowed for the family to request an informal hearing has elapsed, and any requested hearing has been completed. Termination of assistance for a participant may include any or all of the following:

- Refusing to enter into a HAP contract or approve a lease
- Terminating housing assistance payments under an outstanding HAP contract
- Refusing to process or provide assistance under portability procedures

Decisions Subject to Informal Hearing

Circumstances for which OHFA must give a participant family an opportunity for an informal hearing are as follows:

- A determination of the family's annual or adjusted income, and the use of such income to compute the housing assistance payment
- A determination of the appropriate utility allowance (if any) for tenant-paid utilities from OHFA's utility allowance schedule
- A determination of the family unit size under OHFA's subsidy standards
- A determination to terminate assistance for a participant family because of the family's actions or failure to act
- A determination to terminate assistance because the participant has been absent from the assisted unit for longer than the maximum period permitted under OHFA policy and HUD rules
- A determination to terminate a family's Family Self Sufficiency contract, withhold supportive services, or propose forfeiture of the family's escrow account [24 CFR 984.303(i)]

Circumstances for which an informal hearing is not required are as follows:

- Discretionary administrative determinations by OHFA
- General policy issues or class grievances
- Establishment of OHFA's schedule of utility allowances for families in the program
- OHFA determination not to approve an extension or suspension of a voucher term
- OHFA determination not to approve a unit or tenancy

- OHFA determination that a unit selected by the applicant is not in compliance with the HQS
- OHFA determination that the unit is not in accordance with HQS because of family size
- A determination by OHFA to exercise or not to exercise any right or remedy against an owner under a HAP contract

OHFA will only offer participants the opportunity for an informal hearing when required to do so by the regulations.

Informal Hearing Procedures

Notice to the Family [24 CFR 982.555(c)]

When OHFA makes a decision that is subject to informal hearing procedures, OHFA must inform the family of its right to an informal hearing at the same time that it informs the family of the decision.

For decisions related to the family's annual or adjusted income, the determination of the appropriate utility allowance, and the determination of the family unit size, OHFA must notify the family that they may ask for an explanation of the basis of the determination, and that if they do not agree with the decision, they may request an informal hearing on the decision.

For decisions related to the termination of the family's assistance, or the denial of a family's request for an exception to OHFA's subsidy standards, the notice must contain a brief statement of the reasons for the decision, a statement that if the family does not agree with the decision, the family may request an informal hearing on the decision, and a statement of the deadline for the family to request an informal hearing.

In cases where OHFA makes a decision for which an informal hearing must be offered, the notice to the family will include all of the following:

The proposed action or decision of OHFA.

A brief statement of the reasons for the decision.

The date the proposed action will take place.

A statement of the family's right to an explanation of the basis for OHFA's decision.

A statement that if the family does not agree with the decision the family may request an informal hearing of the decision.

A deadline for the family to request the informal hearing.

Scheduling an Informal Hearing [24 CFR 982.555(d)]

When an informal hearing is required, OHFA must proceed with the hearing in a reasonably expeditious manner upon the request of the family.

A request for an informal hearing must be made in writing and delivered to OHFA either in person or by first class mail, by the close of the business day, no later than 14 days from the date of OHFA's decision or notice to terminate assistance.

OHFA will schedule and send written notice of the informal hearing to the family within 30 days of the family's request (OHFA makes every reasonable attempt to schedule informal hearings within 30 days, however, delays may occur). The informal hearing may be scheduled for an in-office appointment or remote hearing to be conducted by the hearing officer. The family may request to reschedule a hearing for good cause, or if it is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities. Good cause is defined as an unavoidable conflict, which seriously affects the health, safety, or welfare of the family. Requests to reschedule a hearing must be made orally or in writing prior to the hearing date. At its discretion, OHFA may request documentation of the "good cause" prior to rescheduling the hearing.

If the family does not appear at the scheduled time, and was unable to reschedule the hearing in advance due to the nature of the conflict, the family must contact OHFA within 24 hours of the scheduled hearing date, excluding weekends and holidays. OHFA will reschedule the hearing only if the family can show good cause for the failure to appear, or if it is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities.

Pre-Hearing Right to Discovery [24 CFR 982.555(e)]

Participants and OHFA are permitted pre-hearing discovery rights. The family must be given the opportunity to examine before the hearing any OHFA documents that are directly relevant to the hearing. The family must be allowed to copy any such documents at their own expense (OHFA will not allow the family to leave OHFA's offices with any requested documents to make copies). If OHFA does not make the documents available for examination on request of the family, OHFA may not rely on the documents at the hearing.

OHFA hearing procedures may provide that OHFA must be given the opportunity to examine at OHFA offices before the hearing, any family documents that are directly relevant to the hearing. OHFA must be allowed to copy any such document at OHFA's expense. If the family does not

make the document available for examination on request of OHFA, the family may not rely on the document at the hearing.

For the purpose of informal hearings, documents include records and regulations.

The family will be allowed to copy any documents related to the hearing at a cost of $.25 cents per page. The family must request discovery of OHFA documents no later than two business days prior to the scheduled hearing date

OHFA must be given an opportunity to examine at OHFA's offices before the hearing any family documents that are directly relevant to the hearing. As applicable, OHFA may send a written request for a copy of all documents that the participant intends to present or utilize at the hearing. The participant must make the documents available no later than two business days prior to the scheduled hearing date.

Participant's Right to Bring Counsel [24 CFR 982.555(e)(3)]

At its own expense, the family may be represented by a lawyer or other representative at the informal hearing.

Informal Hearing Officer [24 CFR 982.555(e)(4)]

Informal hearings will be conducted by a person or persons approved by OHFA, other than the person who made or approved the decision or a subordinate of the person who made or approved the decision.

Attendance at the Informal Hearing

Hearings may be attended by a hearing officer and the following applicable persons:

OHFA representative(s) and any witnesses for OHFA

The participant and any witnesses for the participant

The participant's counsel or other representative

Any other person approved by OHFA as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability

Conduct at Hearings

The person who conducts the hearing may regulate the conduct of the hearing in accordance with OHFA's hearing procedures [24 CFR 982.555(e)(4)(ii)].

The hearing officer is responsible to manage the order of business and to ensure that hearings are conducted in a professional and businesslike manner. Attendees are expected to comply with all hearing procedures established by the hearing officer and guidelines for conduct. Any person demonstrating disruptive, abusive, or otherwise inappropriate behavior will be excused from the hearing at the discretion of the hearing officer.

Evidence [24 CFR 982.555(e)(5)]

OHFA and the family must be given the opportunity to present evidence and question any witnesses. In general, all evidence is admissible at an informal hearing. Evidence may be considered without regard to admissibility under the rules of evidence applicable to judicial proceedings.

Any evidence to be considered by the hearing officer must be presented at the time of the hearing. There are four categories of evidence.

Oral evidence: the testimony of witnesses

Documentary evidence: a writing, which is relevant to the case, for example, a letter written to OHFA. Writings include all forms of recorded communication or representation, including letters, words, pictures, sounds, videotapes, symbols, or combinations thereof.

Demonstrative evidence: Evidence created specifically for the hearing and presented as an illustrative aid to assist the hearing officer, such as a model, a chart, or other diagram.

Real evidence: A tangible item relating directly to the case.

Hearsay Evidence is evidence of a statement that was made other than by a witness while testifying at the hearing and that is offered to prove the truth of the matter. Even though evidence, including hearsay, is generally admissible, hearsay evidence alone cannot be used as the sole basis for the hearing officer's decision.

If either OHFA or the family fail to comply with the discovery requirements described above, the hearing officer may refuse to admit such evidence.

Other than the failure of a party to comply with discovery, the hearing officer has the authority to overrule any objections to evidence.

Procedures for Rehearing or Further Hearing

The hearing officer may ask the family for additional information and/or might adjourn the hearing in order to reconvene at a later date, before reaching a decision. If the family misses an appointment or deadline ordered by the hearing officer, the action of the PHA will take effect and another hearing will not be granted.

Issuance of Decision [24 CFR 982.555(e)(6)]

The person who conducts the hearing must issue a written decision, stating briefly the reasons for the decision. Factual determinations relating to the individual circumstances of the family must be based on a preponderance of evidence presented at the hearing.

In rendering a decision, the hearing officer will consider the following matters:

OHFA Notice to the Family: The hearing officer will determine if the reasons for OHFA's decision are factually stated in the Notice.

Discovery: The hearing officer will determine if OHFA and the family were given the opportunity to examine any relevant documents in accordance with OHFA policy.

OHFA Evidence to Support OHFA's Decision: The evidence consists of the facts presented. Evidence is not conclusion and it is not argument. The hearing officer will evaluate the facts to determine if they support OHFA's conclusion.

Validity of Grounds for Termination of Assistance (when applicable): The hearing officer will determine if the termination of assistance is for one of the grounds specified in the HUD regulations and OHFA policies. If the grounds for termination are not specified in the regulations or in compliance with OHFA policies, then the decision of OHFA will be overturned.

The hearing officer will issue a written decision to the family and OHFA no later than 14 days after the hearing.

The hearing officer's conclusion to uphold or overturn OHFA's decision will be derived from the facts that were found to be true by a preponderance of the evidence. Preponderance of the evidence is defined as evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence which as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not. Preponderance of the evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence.

Effect of Final Decision [24 CFR 982.555(f)]

OHFA is not bound by the decision of the hearing officer for matters in which OHFA is not required to provide an opportunity for a hearing, decisions that exceed the authority of the hearing officer, decisions that conflict with or contradict HUD regulations, requirements, or are otherwise contrary to federal, state, or local laws.

If OHFA determines it is not bound by the hearing officer's decision in accordance with HUD regulations, OHFA must promptly notify the family of the determination and the reason for the determination.

> OHFA will send a letter to the participant or their representative explaining the final decision by mail or electronic delivery

16-III.D. HEARING AND APPEAL PROVISIONS FOR NONCITIZENS [24 CFR 5.514]

Denial or termination of assistance based on immigration status is subject to special hearing and notice rules. Applicants who are denied assistance due to immigration status are entitled to an informal hearing, not an informal review.

Assistance to a family may not be delayed, denied, or terminated on the basis of immigration status at any time prior to a decision under the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) appeal process. Assistance to a family may not be terminated or denied while OHFA's hearing is pending, but assistance to an applicant may be delayed pending the completion of the informal hearing.

A decision against a family member, issued in accordance with the USCIS appeal process or OHFA's informal hearing process, does not preclude the family from exercising the right, that may otherwise be available, to seek redress directly through judicial procedures.

Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance [24 CFR 5.514(d)]

The notice of denial or termination of assistance for noncitizens must advise the family:

- That financial assistance will be denied or terminated, and provide a brief explanation of the reasons for the proposed denial or termination of assistance.
- The family may be eligible for proration of assistance.
- In the case of a participant, the criteria and procedures for obtaining relief under the provisions for preservation of families [24 CFR 5.514 and 5.518].
- That the family has a right to request an appeal to the USCIS of the results of secondary verification of immigration status and to submit additional documentation or explanation in support of the appeal.
- That the family has a right to request an informal hearing with OHFA either upon completion of the USCIS appeal or in lieu of the USCIS appeal.
- For applicants, assistance may not be delayed until the conclusion of the USCIS appeal process, but assistance may be delayed during the period of the informal hearing process.

USCIS Appeal Process [24 CFR 5.514(e)]

When OHFA receives notification that the USCIS secondary verification failed to confirm eligible immigration status, OHFA must notify the family of the results of the USCIS verification. The family will have 14 days from the date of the notification to request an appeal of the USCIS results. The request for appeal must be made by the family in writing directly to the USCIS. The family must provide OHFA with a copy of the written request for appeal and the proof of mailing.

OHFA will notify the family in writing of the results of the USCIS secondary verification within 14 days of receiving the results.

The family must provide OHFA with a copy of the written request for appeal and proof of mailing within 14 days of sending the request to the USCIS.

The family must forward to the designated USCIS office any additional documentation or written explanation in support of the appeal. This material must include a copy of the USCIS document verification request (used to process the secondary request) or such other form specified by the USCIS, and a letter indicating that the family is requesting an appeal of the USCIS immigration status verification results.

The USCIS will notify the family, with a copy to OHFA, of its decision. When the USCIS notifies OHFA of the decision, OHFA must notify the family of its right to request an informal hearing.

OHFA will send written notice to the family of its right to request an informal hearing within 14 days of receiving notice of the USCIS decision regarding the family's immigration status.

Informal Hearing Procedures for Applicants [24 CFR 5.514(f)]

After notification of the USCIS decision on appeal, or in lieu of an appeal to the USCIS, the family may request that OHFA provide a hearing. The request for a hearing must be made either within 14 days of OHFA's notice of denial, or within 14 days of the USCIS appeal decision.

The informal hearing procedures for applicant families are described below.

Informal Hearing Officer

OHFA must provide an informal hearing before an impartial individual, other than a person who made or approved the decision under review, and other than a person who is a subordinate of the person who made or approved the decision. See Section 16-III.C.

Evidence

The family must be provided the opportunity to examine and copy at the family's expense, at a reasonable time in advance of the hearing, any documents in the possession of OHFA pertaining to the family's eligibility status, or in the possession of the USCIS (as permitted by USCIS requirements), including any records and regulations that may be relevant to the hearing. The family will not be allowed to leave OHFA offices to make copies of documents.

The family will be allowed to copy any documents related to the hearing at a cost of $.25 cents per page. The family must request discovery of OHFA documents no later than two business days prior to the hearing.

The family must be provided the opportunity to present evidence and arguments in support of eligible status. Evidence may be considered without regard to admissibility under the rules of evidence applicable to judicial proceedings.

The family must also be provided the opportunity to refute evidence relied upon by OHFA, and to confront and cross-examine all witnesses on whose testimony or information OHFA relies.

Representation and Interpretive Services

The family is entitled to be represented by an attorney or other designee, at the family's expense, and to have such person make statements on the family's behalf.

The family is entitled to request an interpreter. Upon request, OHFA will provide competent interpretation services, free of charge.

Recording of the Hearing

The family is entitled to have the hearing recorded by audiotape. OHFA may, but is not required to provide a transcript of the hearing.

OHFA will not provide a transcript of an audiotaped hearing.

Hearing Decision

OHFA must provide the family with a written final decision, based solely on the facts presented at the hearing, within 14 calendar days of the date of the informal hearing. The decision must state the basis for the decision.

Informal Hearing Procedures for Residents [24 CFR 5.514(f)]

After notification of the USCIS decision on appeal, or in lieu of an appeal to the USCIS, the family may request that OHFA provide a hearing. The request for a hearing must be made either within 14 days of receipt of OHFA's notice of termination, or within 14 days of receipt of the USCIS appeal decision.

For the informal hearing procedures that apply to participant families whose assistance is being terminated based on immigration status, see Section 16-III.C.

Retention of Documents [24 CFR 5.514(h)]

OHFA must retain for a minimum of 5 years the following documents that may have been submitted to OHFA by the family, or provided to OHFA as part of the USCIS appeal or OHFA's informal hearing process:

- The application for assistance
- The form completed by the family for income reexamination
- Photocopies of any original documents, including original USCIS documents
- The signed verification consent form
- The USCIS verification results
- The request for a USCIS appeal
- The final USCIS determination
- The request for an informal hearing
- The final informal hearing decision

PART IV: OWNER OR FAMILY DEBTS TO OHFA

16-IV.A. OVERVIEW

OHFA is required to include in the administrative plan, policies concerning repayment by a family of amounts owed to OHFA [24 CFR 982.54]. This part describes OHFA's policies for recovery of monies owed to OHFA by families or owners.

When an action or inaction of an owner or participant results in the overpayment of housing assistance, OHFA holds the owner or participant liable to return any overpayments to OHFA.

OHFA will enter into repayment agreements in accordance with the policies contained in this part as a means to recover overpayments.

When an owner or participant refuses to repay monies owed to OHFA, OHFA may utilize other available collection alternatives including, but not limited to, the following:

Collection agencies

Small claims court

Civil law suit

State income tax offset program

16-IV.B. REPAYMENT POLICY

Owner Debts to OHFA

Any amount due to OHFA by an owner must be repaid by the owner within 30 days of OHFA's determination of the debt.

If the owner fails to repay the debt within the required time frame and is entitled to future HAP payments, OHFA will reduce the future HAP payments by the amount owed until the debt is paid in full.

If the owner is not entitled to future HAP payments OHFA may, in its sole discretion, offer to enter into a repayment agreement on terms prescribed by OHFA.

If the owner refuses to repay the debt, does not enter into a repayment agreement, or breaches a repayment agreement, OHFA will ban the owner from future participation in the program and pursue other modes of collection.

Family Debts to OHFA

Any amount owed to OHFA by an HCV family must be repaid by the family. If the family is unable to repay the debt within 30 days, OHFA will offer to enter into a repayment agreement in accordance with the policies below.

If the family refuses to repay the debt, does not enter into a repayment agreement, or breaches a repayment agreement, OHFA will terminate assistance in accordance with the policies in Chapter 12 and pursue other modes of collection.

Repayment Agreement [24 CFR 792.103]

The term repayment agreement refers to a formal written document signed by a tenant or owner and provided to OHFA in which a tenant or owner acknowledges a debt in a specific amount and agrees to repay the amount due at specific time periods.

OHFA will prescribe the terms of the payment agreement, including determining whether to enter into a payment agreement with the family based on the circumstances surrounding the debt to OHFA.

General Repayment Agreement Guidelines for Families

The repayment agreement must be executed by OHFA's internal investigator or their designee.

Payments may only be made by money order or cashier's check.

The family's assistance will be terminated unless OHFA receives the balance of the payment agreement in full within 30 calendar days of the termination notice.

Monthly payments may be decreased in cases of family hardship and if requested with reasonable notice from the family, verification of the hardship, and the approval of a supervisor.

Payment Thresholds

OHFA has the discretion to establish "thresholds and policies" for repayment agreements with families [24 CFR 982.552(c)(1)(vii)].

Execution of the Agreement

Any repayment agreement between OHFA and a family must be signed and dated by OHFA and the head of household and spouse/cohead (if applicable).

The repayment agreement must be executed by OHFA internal investigator or their designee.

Late or Missed Payments

If a payment is not received by the end of the business day on the date due, and prior approval for the missed payment has not been given by OHFA, the agreement may be considered in default. Appropriate collection actions will be taken in accordance with applicable requirements and state laws for delinquent accounts.

If the due date is on a weekend or holiday, the due date will be at the close of the next business day.

This will be considered a breach of the agreement and OHFA will terminate assistance in accordance with the policies in Chapter 12.

No Offer of Repayment Agreement

OHFA generally will not enter into a repayment agreement with a family if there is already a repayment agreement in place with the family or if OHFA determines the family committed program fraud.

Repayment Agreements Involving Improper Payments

Notice PIH 2017-12 requires certain provisions to be included in any repayment agreement involving amounts owed by a family because it underreported or failed to report income:

- A reference to the items in the family briefing packet that state the family's obligation to provide true and complete information at every reexamination and the grounds on which OHFA may terminate assistance because of a family's action or failure to act
- A statement clarifying that each month the family not only must pay to OHFA the monthly payment amount specified in the agreement but must also pay to the owner the family's monthly share of the rent to owner
- A statement that the terms of the repayment agreement may be renegotiated if the family's income decreases or increases
- A statement that late or missed payments constitute default of the repayment agreement and may result in termination of assistance

WRITING OFF DEBTS

Debts will be written off if:

- The debtor's whereabouts are unknown and the debt is more than 5 years old.
- A determination is made that the debtor is judgment proof.
- The debtor is deceased.
- The debtor is confined to an institution indefinitely

PART V: SECTION 8 MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (SEMAP)

16-V.A. OVERVIEW

The Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) is a tool that allows HUD to measure OHFA performance in key areas to ensure program integrity and accountability. SEMAP scores translate into a rating for OHFA as high performing, standard, or troubled. Scores on individual SEMAP indicators, as well as overall SEMAP ratings, can affect OHFA in several ways.

- High-performing PHAs can be given a competitive advantage under notices of funding availability [24 CFR 985.103].
- PHAs with deficiencies on one or more indicators are required to correct the deficiencies and report to HUD [24 CFR 985.106].
- PHAs with an overall rating of “troubled” are subject to additional HUD oversight, including on-site reviews by HUD staff, a requirement to develop a corrective action plan, and monitoring to ensure the successful implementation of the corrective action plan. In addition, PHAs that are designated “troubled” may not use any part of the administrative fee reserve for other housing purposes [24 CFR 985.107].
- HUD may determine that OHFA's failure to correct identified SEMAP deficiencies or to prepare and implement a corrective action plan required by HUD constitutes a default under the ACC [24 CFR 985.109].

16-V.B. SEMAP CERTIFICATION [24 CFR 985.101]

OHFA must submit the HUD-required SEMAP certification form within 60 calendar days after the end of its fiscal year. The certification must be approved by OHFA board resolution and signed by OHFA’s executive director or designee. If OHFA is a unit of local government or a state, a resolution approving the certification is not required, and the certification must be executed by the Section 8 Rental Programs Director.

Failure of OHFA to submit its SEMAP certification within the required time frame will result in an overall performance rating of “troubled.”

OHFA's SEMAP certification is subject to HUD verification by an on-site confirmatory review at any time.

Upon receipt of OHFA's SEMAP certification, HUD will rate OHFA's performance under each SEMAP indicator in accordance with program requirements.

HUD Verification Method

Several of the SEMAP indicators are scored based on a review of a quality control sample selected for this purpose. OHFA or the Independent Auditor must select an unbiased sample that provides an adequate representation of the types of information to be assessed, in accordance with SEMAP requirements [24 CFR 985.2].

If the HUD verification method for the indicator relies on data in the Form-50058 module (formerly known as MTCS) in the PIH Information Center (PIC), and HUD determines that those data are insufficient to verify OHFA's certification on the indicator due to OHFA's failure to adequately report family data, HUD will assign a zero rating for the indicator [24 CFR 985.3].

PART VI: RECORD KEEPING

16-VI.A. OVERVIEW

OHFA must maintain complete and accurate accounts and other records for the program in accordance with HUD requirements, in a manner that permits a speedy and effective audit. All such records must be made available to HUD or the Comptroller General of the United States upon request.

In addition, OHFA must ensure that all applicant and participant files are maintained in a way that protects an individual's privacy rights.

16-VI.B. RECORD RETENTION [24 CFR 982.158]

During the term of each assisted lease, and for at least three years thereafter, OHFA must keep:

- A copy of the executed lease;
- The HAP contract; and
- The application from the family.

In addition, OHFA must keep the following records for at least three years:

- Records that provide income, racial, ethnic, gender, and disability status data on program applicants and participants;

- An application from each ineligible family and notice that the applicant is not eligible;
- HUD-required reports;
- Unit inspection reports;
- Lead-based paint records as required by 24 CFR 35, Subpart B;
- Accounts and other records supporting OHFA's budget and financial statements for the program;
- Records to document the basis for OHFA's determination that rent to owner is a reasonable rent (initially and during the term of a HAP contract); and
- Other records specified by HUD.
- Notice PIH 2014-20 requires PHAs to keep records of all complaints, investigations, notices, and corrective actions related to violations of the Fair Housing Act or the equal access final rule.

If an informal hearing to establish a family's citizenship status is held, longer retention requirements apply for some types of documents. For specific requirements, see Section 16-III.D., Retention of Documents.

16-VI.C. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

OHFA must maintain applicant and participant files and information in accordance with the regulatory requirements described below.

All applicant and participant information will be kept in a secure location and access will be limited to authorized OHFA staff.

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

Privacy Act Requirements [24 CFR 5.212 and Form-9886]

The collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of social security numbers (SSN), employer identification numbers (EIN), any information derived from these numbers, and income information of applicants and participants must be conducted, to the extent applicable, in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974, and all other provisions of Federal, State, and local law.

Applicants and participants, including all adults in the household, are required to sign a consent form, HUD-9886, Authorization for Release of Information. This form incorporates the Federal Privacy Act Statement and describes how the information collected using the form may be used, and under what conditions HUD or OHFA may release the information collected.

Upfront Income Verification (UIV) Records

PHAs that access UIV data through HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System are required to adopt and follow specific security procedures to ensure that all EIV data is protected in accordance with Federal laws, regardless of the media on which the data is recorded (e.g. electronic, paper). These requirements are contained in the HUD issued document, Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System, Security Procedures for Upfront Income Verification data.

> Prior to utilizing HUD's EIV system, OHFA will adopt and implement EIV security procedures required by HUD.

Criminal Records

OHFA may only disclose the criminal conviction records which OHFA receives from a law enforcement agency to officers or employees of OHFA, or to authorized representatives of OHFA who have a job-related need to have access to the information [24 CFR 5.903(e)].

OHFA must establish and implement a system of records management that ensures that any criminal record received by OHFA from a law enforcement agency is maintained confidentially, not misused or improperly disseminated, and destroyed, once the purpose for which the record was requested has been accomplished, including expiration of the period for filing a challenge to OHFA's action without institution of a challenge or final disposition of any such litigation [24 CFR 5.903(g)].

OHFA must establish and implement a system of records management that ensures that any sex offender registration information received by OHFA from a State or local agency is maintained confidentially, not misused or improperly disseminated, and destroyed, once the purpose for which the record was requested has been accomplished, including expiration of the period for filing a challenge to OHFA's action without institution of a challenge or final disposition of any such litigation. However, a record of the screening, including the type of screening and the date performed must be retained [Notice PIH 2012-28]. This requirement does not apply to information that is public information, or is obtained by OHFA other than under 24 CFR 5.905.

Medical/Disability Records

OHFA is not permitted to inquire about the nature or extent of a person's disability. OHFA may not inquire about a person's diagnosis or details of treatment for a disability or medical condition.

Documentation of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking

For requirements and OHFA policies related to management of documentation obtained from victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, see section 16-IX.E.

PART VII: REPORTING AND RECORD KEEPING FOR CHILDREN WITH ENVIRONMENTAL INTERVENTION BLOOD LEAD LEVEL

16-VII.A. OVERVIEW

OHFA has certain responsibilities relative to children with elevated blood lead levels that are receiving HCV assistance. HUD has defined an ‘‘elevated blood lead level’’ (EBLL) in children under the age of six (6), in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance. An “elevated blood lead level” means a confirmed concentration of lead in whole blood of a child under age 6 equal to or greater than the concentration in the most recent guidance published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on recommending that an environmental intervention be conducted. (When HHS changes the value, HUD will publish a notice in the **Federal Register**, with the opportunity for public comment, on its intent to apply the changed value to this part, and, after considering comments, publish a notice on its applying the changed value to this part.) Currently, CDC’s reference range value is 3.5 μg/dL (3.5 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood).Some of the notification, verification, and hazard reduction requirements are discussed in Chapter 8. This part deals with the reporting requirements, and data collection and record keeping responsibilities that OHFA is subject to.

16-VII.B. REPORTING REQUIREMENT [24 CFR 35.1225(e)]

Notification

A medical health care provider, public health department, the family, owner, or outside source may notify OHFA of an elevated blood lead level child living in a program unit.

When information regarding an elevated blood lead level child under age six is received from the family, owner, or other sources not associated with the medical health community, OHFA must immediately verify the information with a public health department or other medical health care provider.

If either the public health department or a private medical health agency provides verification that the child has an environmental intervention blood lead level, OHFA will proceed to complete an environmental investigation of the unit, common areas and exterior surfaces. This requirement does not apply if the public health department has already conducted an evaluation between the date the child’s blood was last sampled and the receipt of notification of the child’s condition.

When OHFA receives a report of an elevated blood lead level child from any source other than the public health department, OHFA will notify the health department within five (5) business days.

Environmental Investigation

Within 15 days of notification by a public health department or medical health care provider, OHFA will schedule an environmental investigation of the dwelling unit, including common areas servicing the dwelling unit, if the child lived in the unit at the time the child's blood was sampled. In most cases, the local health department will complete the environmental investigation free of charge. If this is not possible, OHFA will hire and pay for a certified risk assessor or other qualified lead-based paint specialist. Upon completion of the environmental investigation, OHFA will provide the report to the owner.

The owner must notify the building residents of the results of the environmental investigation within 15 days of receipt from OHFA.

Hazard Reduction

The owner must complete reduction of identified lead-based paint hazards in accordance with 24 CFR 35.1325 or 35.1330 as identified in the environmental investigation within 30 days (or date specified by OHFA if an extension is granted for exterior surfaces). Hazard reduction activities may include paint stabilization, abatement, interim controls, or dust and soil contamination control. The appropriate method of correction should be identified in the environmental investigation.

Hazard reduction is considered complete when a clearance examination has been completed and the report indicates that all identified hazards have been treated and clearance has been achieved, or when the public health department certifies that the hazard reduction is complete. The owner must notify all building residents of any hazard reduction activities within 15 days of completion of activities.

Failure to complete hazard reduction activities (including clearance) within 30 days (or later if OHFA grants an extension for exterior surfaces) of notification constitutes a violation of HQS, and appropriate action against the owner will be taken if a program family occupies the unit. If the unit is vacant when OHFA notifies the owner, the unit may not be re-occupied by another assisted family, regardless of the ages of children in the family, until compliance with the lead-based paint requirement.

16-VII.C. DATA COLLECTION AND RECORD KEEPING [24 CFR 35.1225(f)]

Quarterly, OHFA will attempt to obtain from the state health department the names and addresses of children under age six with an identified environmental intervention blood lead level. OHFA will match information received from the health department with information about program families. If a match occurs, OHFA will follow all procedures for notifying owners and conducting environmental investigations as stated above.

Quarterly, OHFA will report a list of addresses of units occupied by children under age six, receiving assistance to the public health department, unless the health department indicates that such a report is not necessary or wanted.

Risk assessors and public health departments conducting environmental investigation and/or risk assessments involving elevated blood lead level children will issue a report on any needed corrections and appropriate methods to correct lead hazards. The PHA must notify the owner of the deadline for completing the corrections.

PART VIII: DETERMINATION OF INSUFFICIENT FUNDING

16-VIII.A. OVERVIEW

The HCV regulations allow OHFA to deny families permission to move and to terminate Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contracts if funding under the consolidated ACC is insufficient to support continued assistance [24 CFR 982.354(e)(1) and 982.454]. If a PHA denies a family a portability move based on insufficient funding, the PHA is required to notify the local HUD office within 10 business days [24 CFR 982.354]. Insufficient funding may also affect OHFA's ability to issue vouchers to families on the waiting list. This part discusses the methodology OHFA will use to determine whether OHFA has sufficient funding to issue vouchers, approve moves, and to continue subsidizing all families currently under a HAP contract.

16-VIII.B. METHODOLOGY

OHFA will determine whether there is adequate funding to issue vouchers, approve moves to higher cost units and areas, and continue subsidizing all current participants by comparing OHFA's annual budget authority to the annual total HAP needs on a monthly basis. The total HAP needs for the calendar year will be projected by establishing the actual HAP costs year to date. To that figure, OHFA will add anticipated HAP expenditures for the remainder of the calendar year. Projected HAP expenditures will be calculated by multiplying the projected number of units leased per remaining months by the most current month's average HAP. The projected number of units leased per month will take into account the average monthly turnover of participant families. If the total annual HAP needs

equal or exceed the annual budget authority, or if OHFA cannot support the cost of the proposed subsidy commitment (voucher issuance or move) based on the funding analysis, OHFA will be considered to have insufficient funding.

PART IX: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA): NOTIFICATION, DOCUMENTATION, CONFIDENTIALITY

16-IX.A. OVERVIEW

The Violence Against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) provides special protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking who are applying for or receiving assistance under the housing choice voucher (HCV) program. If your state or local laws provide greater protection for such victims, those laws apply in conjunction with VAWA.

In addition to definitions of key terms used in VAWA, this part contains general VAWA requirements and OHFA policies in three areas: notification, documentation, and confidentiality. Specific VAWA requirements and OHFA policies are located primarily in the following sections: 3-I.C, "Family Breakup and Remaining Member of Tenant Family"; 3-III.G, "Prohibition Against Denial of Assistance to Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking"; 10-I.A, "Allowable Moves"; 10-I.B, "Restrictions on Moves"; 12-II.E, "Terminations Related to Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking;" and 12-II.F, "Termination Notice."

16-IX.B. DEFINITIONS [24 CFR 5.2003, 42 USC 13925]

As used in VAWA:

- The term bifurcate means, with respect to a public housing or Section 8 lease, to divide a lease as a matter of law such that certain tenants can be evicted or removed while the remaining family members' lease and occupancy rights are allowed to remain intact.
- The term dating violence means violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:

    - The length of the relationship
    - The type of relationship
    - The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship

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

The term affiliated individual means, with respect to a person:

- A spouse, parent, brother or sister, or child of that individual, or an individual to whom that individual stands in the position or place of a parent or guardian (for example, the affiliated individual is a person in the care, custody, or control of that individual); or
- Any other individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in the household of the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking.

- The term sexual assault means:

  - Any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by Federal, tribal, or State law, including when the victim lacks the capacity to consent

- The term stalking means engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to:

  - Fear for the person's individual safety or the safety of others; or
  - Suffer substantial emotional distress.

16-IX.C. NOTIFICATION OF VAWA PROTECTIONS [24 CFR 5.2005(a)]

Notification of Occupancy Rights Under VAWA and Certification Form

OHFA must provide to each of its applicants and to each of its tenants the notice of occupancy rights and the certification form as described in this section:

> (i) A "Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence Against Women Act," as prescribed and in accordance with directions provided by HUD, that explains the VAWA protections under this subpart, including the right to confidentiality, and any limitations on those protections; and
>
> (ii) A certification form, in a form approved by HUD, to be completed by the victim to document an incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking.

Notification to Program Applicants and Participants [24 CFR 5.2005(a)(2)]

OHFA is required to inform program applicants and participants of their rights under VAWA, including their right to confidentiality and the limits thereof, when they are denied assistance or admission, when they are provided assistance or admission to the program, and when they are notified of an eviction or termination of housing benefits.

OHFA will include information about VAWA in its briefing packet, on its website, and as prescribed and in accordance with directions provided by HUD that includes the HUD provided notice, VAWA certification, and other forms, as applicable. OHFA will provide the HUD tenancy addendum that contains VAWA protections to program participants and landlords.

OHFA will use the HUD provided VAWA forms to communicate and document VAWA incidents and acceptable alternate documentation for those who are or have been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, as applicable, for applicants, participants, and landlords. Please see the following list:

1. Notice of Occupancy Rights (Form HUD-5380, see Exhibit 16-1)
2. Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking and Alternate Documentation (Form HUD-5382, see Exhibit 16-2)
3. OHFA's Emergency Transfer Plan (see Exhibit 16-3)
4. Emergency Transfer Request form for Certain Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking, Form HUD-5383 (see Exhibit 16-4)

For additional assistance, please contact The National Domestic Violence Hot Line: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY) and see the contact information for some local victim advocacy groups and/or service providers (included in Exhibit 16-1).

OHFA is not limited to providing VAWA information at the times specified in the above policy. If OHFA decides to provide VAWA information to a participant following an incident of domestic violence, Notice PIH 2017-08 cautions against sending the information by mail, since the abuser may be monitoring the mail. The notice recommends that in such cases OHFA make alternative delivery arrangements that will not put the victim at risk.

Whenever OHFA has reason to suspect that providing information about VAWA to a participant might place a victim of domestic violence at risk, it will attempt to deliver the information by hand directly to the victim or by having the victim come to an office or other space that may be safer for the individual, making reasonable accommodations as necessary. For example, the OHFA may decide not to send mail regarding VAWA protections to the victim's unit if OHFA believes the perpetrator may have access to the victim's mail, unless requested by the victim.

When discussing VAWA with the victim, OHFA will take reasonable precautions to ensure that no one can overhear the conversation, such as having conversations in a private room.

The victim may, but is not required to, designate an attorney, advocate, or other secure contact for communications regarding VAWA protections.

16-IX.D. DOCUMENTATION [24 CFR 5.2007]

If OHFA is presented with a claim for initial or continued assistance based on status as a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or criminal activity related to any of these forms of abuse, OHFA would request that the individual making the claim document the abuse. Documentation must be in writing and must be provided to OHFA within 14 business days after the VAWA claim is made. OHFA may extend this time period at its discretion [24 CFR 5.2007(a)(2)(ii)].

The individual may satisfy OHFA's request by providing any one of the following three forms of documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(b)]:

(1) A completed and signed HUD-approved certification form (HUD-5382, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking), which must include the name of the perpetrator only if the name of the perpetrator is safe to provide and is known to the victim. The form may be filled out and submitted on behalf of the victim.
(2) A federal, state, tribal, territorial, or local police report or court record, or an administrative record.
(3) Documentation signed by a person who has assisted the victim in addressing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, or the effects of such abuse. This person may be an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider; an attorney; a mental health professional; or a medical professional. The person signing the documentation must attest under penalty of perjury to the person's belief that the incidents in question are bona fide incidents of abuse. The victim must also sign the documentation.

OHFA may not require third-party documentation (forms 2 and 3) in addition to certification (form 1), except as specified below under "Conflicting Documentation," nor may it require certification in addition to third-party documentation [VAWA final rule].

Any request for documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking will specify a deadline of 14 business days following receipt of the request and failure to submit the documentation means that OHFA does not need to grant any VAWA protections.

If you request an extension in writing OHFA may, in its discretion, determine whether to extend the deadline. OHFA will consider factors that may contribute to the victim's

inability to provide documentation in a timely manner, including cognitive limitations, disabilities, limited English proficiency, absence from the unit, administrative delays, the danger of further violence, and the victim's need to address health or safety issues.

Any extension granted by OHFA will be in writing. If you fail to submit the documentation by any extension date granted, OHFA does not need to grant any VAWA protections.

VAWA also protects the rights of certain noncitizens who are battered or subjected to extreme cruelty by a spouse or parent, who is a United States Citizen or lawful permanent resident (LPR), to apply for and receive assistance. HUD has determined that self-petitioners can indicate that they are in "satisfactory immigration status" when applying for assistance or continued assistance. Housing assistance and all other VAWA protections will be granted to the self-petitioner throughout the verification process until a final determination of LPR status is made [Notice PIH 2017-02].

Conflicting Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(b)(2)]

In cases where OHFA receives conflicting certification documents from two or more members of a household, each claiming to be a victim and naming one or more of the other petitioning household members as the perpetrator, OHFA may determine which is the true victim by requiring each to provide acceptable third-party documentation, as described above (forms 2 and 3) within 30 calendar days of the date of the request for third-party documentation. OHFA may also request third-party documentation when submitted documentation contains information that conflicts with existing information already available to OHFA. Individuals have 30 calendar days to return third-party verification to OHFA. If OHFA does not receive third-party documentation, and OHFA will deny or terminate assistance as a result, OHFA must hold separate hearings for the tenants [Notice PIH 2017-08].

OHFA must honor any court orders issued to protect the victim or to address the distribution of property.

If presented with conflicting certification documents from members of the same household, OHFA will attempt to determine which is the true victim by requiring each of them to provide third-party documentation in accordance with 24 CFR 5.2007 and by following any HUD guidance on how such determinations should be made. The family will have 30 calendar days from the date of request by OHFA to provide this documentation.

If OHFA does not receive third-party documentation within the required timeframe (and any extensions) OHFA will deny VAWA protections and will notify the applicant or tenant in writing of the denial. If, as a result, the applicant or tenant is denied or terminated from the program, OHFA will hold separate hearings for the applicants or tenants.

Discretion to Require No Formal Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(b)(1)(iv)]

OHFA has the discretion to provide benefits to an individual based solely on the individual's statement or other corroborating evidence—i.e., without requiring formal documentation of abuse in accordance with 24 CFR 5.2007(b)(1)(iv).

> If OHFA accepts an individual's statement or other corroborating evidence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, OHFA will document acceptance of the statement or evidence in the individual's file.

Failure to Provide Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(a)(2)]

In order to deny relief for protection under VAWA, OHFA must provide the individual requesting relief with a written request for documentation of abuse. If the individual fails to provide the documentation within 14 business days from the date of receipt, or such longer time as OHFA may allow, OHFA may deny relief for protection under VAWA.

16-IX.E. CONFIDENTIALITY [24 CFR 5.2007(c)]

All information provided to OHFA regarding domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, including the fact that an individual is a victim of such violence or stalking, must be retained in confidence. This means that OHFA (1) may not enter the information into any shared database, (2) may not allow employees or others to access the information unless they are explicitly authorized to do so and have a need to know the information for purposes of their work, and (3) may not provide the information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that the disclosure is (a) requested or consented to by the individual in writing, (b) required for use in an eviction proceeding, or (c) otherwise required by applicable law.

EXHIBIT 16-1

NOTICE OF OCCUPANCY RIGHTS UNDER THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
OMB Approval No. 2577-0286
Expires 6/30/2017

Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA)[1]
Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence Against Women Act[2]

To all Tenants and Applicants

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) provides protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. VAWA protections are not only available to women, but are available equally to all individuals regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.[3] The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the Federal agency that oversees that the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program is in compliance with VAWA. This notice explains your rights under VAWA. A HUD-approved certification form is attached to this notice. You can fill out this form to show that you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and that you wish to use your rights under VAWA."

Protections for Applicants

If you otherwise qualify for assistance under the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program**,** you cannot be denied admission or denied assistance because you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Protections for Tenants

If you are receiving assistance under the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program**,** you may not be denied assistance, terminated from participation, or be evicted from your rental housing because you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Also, if you or an affiliated individual of yours is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking by a member of your household or any guest, you may not be denied rental assistance or occupancy rights under the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program solely on the basis of criminal activity directly relating to that domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

notice uses HP for housing provider but the housing provider should insert its name where HP is used. HUD's program-specific regulations identify the individual or entity responsible for providing the notice of occupancy rights.

[2] Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

[3] Housing providers cannot discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic, including race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, or age. HUD-assisted and HUD-insured housing must be made available to all otherwise eligible individuals regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.

Affiliated individual means your spouse, parent, brother, sister, or child, or a person to whom you stand in the place of a parent or guardian (for example, the affiliated individual is in your care, custody, or control); or any individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in your household.

Removing the Abuser or Perpetrator from the Household

Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) may divide (bifurcate) your lease in order to evict the individual or terminate the assistance of the individual who has engaged in criminal activity (the abuser or perpetrator) directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

If Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) chooses to remove the abuser or perpetrator, OHFA may not take away the rights of eligible tenants to the unit or otherwise punish the remaining tenants. If the evicted abuser or perpetrator was the sole tenant to have established eligibility for assistance under the program, OHFA must allow the tenant who is or has been a victim and other household members to remain in the unit for a period of time, in order to establish eligibility under the program or under another HUD housing program covered by VAWA, or, find alternative housing.

In removing the abuser or perpetrator from the household, OHFA must follow Federal, State, and local eviction procedures. In order to divide a lease, OHFA may, but is not required to, ask you for documentation or certification of the incidences of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Moving to Another Unit

Upon your request, OHFA may permit you to move to another unit, subject to the availability of other units, and still keep your assistance. In order to approve a request, OHFA may ask you to provide documentation that you are requesting to move because of an incidence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. If the request is a request for emergency transfer, the housing provider may ask you to submit a written request or fill out a form where you certify that you meet the criteria for an emergency transfer under VAWA. The criteria are:

(1) You are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. If your housing provider does not already have documentation that you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, your housing provider may ask you for such documentation, as described in the documentation section below.

(2) You expressly request the emergency transfer. Your housing provider may choose to require that you submit a form, or may accept another written or oral request.

(3) You reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your current unit. This means you have a reason to fear that if you do not receive a transfer you would suffer violence in the very near future.

OR

You are a victim of sexual assault and the assault occurred on the premises during the 90-calendar-day period before you request a transfer. If you are a victim of sexual assault, then in addition to qualifying for an emergency transfer because you reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your unit, you may qualify for an emergency transfer if the sexual assault occurred on the premises of the property from which you are seeking your transfer, and that assault happened within the 90-calendar-day period before you expressly request the transfer.

OHFA will keep confidential requests for emergency transfers by victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and the location of any move by such victims and their families.

The housing provider's emergency transfer plan provides further information on emergency transfers, and the housing provider must make a copy of its emergency transfer plan available to you if you ask to see it.

Documenting You Are or Have Been a Victim of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking

OHFA can, but is not required to, ask you to provide documentation to "certify" that you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Such request from OHFA must be in writing, and OHFA must give you at least 14 business days (Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays do not count) from the day you receive the request to provide the documentation. OHFA may, but does not have to, extend the deadline for the submission of documentation upon your request.

You can provide one of the following to OHFA as documentation. It is your choice which of the following to submit if OHFA asks you to provide documentation that you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

- A complete HUD-approved certification form given to you by OHFA with this notice, that documents an incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The form will ask for your name, the date, time, and location of the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and a description of the incident. The certification form provides for including the name of the abuser or perpetrator if the name of the abuser or perpetrator is known and is safe to provide.

- A record of a Federal, State, tribal, territorial, or local law enforcement agency, court, or administrative agency that documents the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Examples of such records include police reports, protective orders, and restraining orders, among others.

- A statement, which you must sign, along with the signature of an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, a medical professional or a mental health professional (collectively, "professional") from whom you sought assistance in

addressing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or the effects of abuse, and with the professional selected by you attesting under penalty of perjury that he or she believes that the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking are grounds for protection.

- Any other statement or evidence that OHFA has agreed to accept.

If you fail or refuse to provide one of these documents within the 14 business days, OHFA does not have to provide you with the protections contained in this notice.

If OHFA receives conflicting evidence that an incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking has been committed (such as certification forms from two or more members of a household each claiming to be a victim and naming one or more of the other petitioning household members as the abuser or perpetrator), OHFA has the right to request that you provide third-party documentation within thirty 30 calendar days in order to resolve the conflict. If you fail or refuse to provide third-party documentation where there is conflicting evidence, OHFA does not have to provide you with the protections contained in this notice.

Confidentiality

OHFA must keep confidential any information you provide related to the exercise of your rights under VAWA, including the fact that you are exercising your rights under VAWA.

OHFA must not allow any individual administering assistance or other services on behalf of OHFA (for example, employees and contractors) to have access to confidential information unless for reasons that specifically call for these individuals to have access to this information under applicable Federal, State, or local law.

OHFA must not enter your information into any shared database or disclose your information to any other entity or individual. OHFA, however, may disclose the information provided if:

- You give written permission to OHFA to release the information on a time-limited basis.

- OHFA needs to use the information in an eviction or termination proceeding, such as to evict your abuser or perpetrator or terminate your abuser or perpetrator from assistance under this program.

- A law requires OHFA or your landlord to release the information.

VAWA does not limit OHFA's duty to honor court orders about access to or control of the property. This includes orders issued to protect a victim and orders dividing property among household members in cases where a family breaks up.

Reasons a Tenant Eligible for Occupancy Rights under VAWA May Be Evicted or Assistance May Be Terminated

You can be evicted and your assistance can be terminated for serious or repeated lease violations that are not related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking committed against you. However, OHFA cannot hold tenants who have been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to a more demanding set of rules than it applies to tenants who have not been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

The protections described in this notice might not apply, and you could be evicted and your assistance terminated, if OHFA can demonstrate that not evicting you or terminating your assistance would present a real physical danger that:

1) Would occur within an immediate time frame, and

2) Could result in death or serious bodily harm to other tenants or those who work on the property.

If OHFA can demonstrate the above, OHFA should only terminate your assistance or evict you if there are no other actions that could be taken to reduce or eliminate the threat.

Other Laws

VAWA does not replace any Federal, State, or local law that provides greater protection for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. You may be entitled to additional housing protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking under other Federal laws, as well as under State and local laws.

Non-Compliance with The Requirements of This Notice

You may report a covered housing provider's violations of these rights and seek additional assistance, if needed, by contacting or filing a complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Oklahoma City Field Office, 301 NW 6th Street, Suite 200, Oklahoma City, OK 73102. Phone: (405) 609-8400 Fax: (405) 609-8982 TTY: (800) 877-8339 or the Tulsa Field Office, 110 West 7th Street, Suite 1110, Tulsa, OK 74119. Phone: (918) 292-8900 Fax: (918) 292-8983 TTY: (800) 877-8339.

For Additional Information

You may view a copy of HUD's final VAWA rule at https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-11-16/pdf/2016-25888.pdf.

Additionally, OHFA must make a copy of HUD's VAWA regulations available to you if you ask to see them.

For questions regarding VAWA, please contact the Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency's (OHFA) Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program at 405-848-1144 or 1-800-256-1489.

For help regarding an abusive relationship, you may call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or, for persons with hearing impairments, 1-800-787-3224 (TTY). You may also contact the Oklahoma Safeline at 1-800-522-7233 to locate a service provider in your area or call 211 for help. If you are in immediate danger call 911.

For tenants who are or have been victims of stalking seeking help may visit the National Center for Victims of Crime's Stalking Resource Center at https://www.victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center.

For help regarding sexual assault, you may contact the Oklahoma Safeline at 1-800-522-7233 or visit http://ocadvsa.org/local-resources or call 211.

Victims of stalking seeking help may contact the Oklahoma Safeline at 1-800-522-7233 or visit http://ocadvsa.org/local-resources or call 211.

For additional local resources for victims of domestic violence, please contact:
Palomar: OKC's Family Justice Center
P: 405-552-1005
1140 N. Hudson Avenue
Oklahoma City
www.palomarokc.org

Tulsa Family Safety Center
P: 918-742-7480

One Safe Place Family Justice Center
P: 405-765-8556

Attachment: Certification form HUD-5382

EXHIBIT 16-2

CERTIFICATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING, AND ALTERNATE DOCUMENTATION

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

OMB Approval No. 2577-0286
Exp. 06/30/2017

Purpose of Form: The Violence Against Women Act ("VAWA") protects applicants, tenants, and program participants in certain HUD programs from being evicted, denied housing assistance, or terminated from housing assistance based on acts of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against them. Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Use of This Optional Form: If you are seeking VAWA protections from your housing provider, your housing provider may give you a written request that asks you to submit documentation about the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

In response to this request, you or someone on your behalf may complete this optional form and submit it to your housing provider, or you may submit one of the following types of third-party documentation:

(1) A document signed by you and an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, or medical professional, or a mental health professional (collectively, "professional") from whom you have sought assistance relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or the effects of abuse. The document must specify, under penalty of perjury, that the professional believes the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking occurred and meet the definition of "domestic violence," "dating violence," "sexual assault," or "stalking" in HUD's regulations at 24 CFR 5.2003.

(2) A record of a Federal, State, tribal, territorial or local law enforcement agency, court, or administrative agency; or

(3) At the discretion of the housing provider, a statement or other evidence provided by the applicant or tenant.

Submission of Documentation: The time period to submit documentation is 14 business days from the date that you receive a written request from your housing provider asking that you provide documentation of the occurrence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Your housing provider may, but is not required to, extend the time period to submit the documentation, if you request an extension of the time period. If the requested information is not received within 14 business days of when you received the request for the documentation, or any extension of the date provided by your housing provider, your housing provider does not need to grant you any of the VAWA protections. Distribution or issuance of this form does not serve as a written request for certification.

Confidentiality: All information provided to your housing provider concerning the incident(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking shall be kept confidential and such details shall not be entered into any shared database. Employees of your housing provider are not to have access to these details unless to grant or deny VAWA protections to you, and such employees may not disclose this information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that disclosure is: (i) consented to by you in writing in a time-limited release; (ii) required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance; or (iii) otherwise required by applicable law.

TO BE COMPLETED BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING

1. **Date the written request is received by victim:** _____
2. **Name of victim:** _____
3. **Your name (if different from victim's):** _____
4. **Name(s) of other family member(s) listed on the lease:** _____

_____

5. **Residence of victim:** _____
6. **Name of the accused perpetrator (if known and can be safely disclosed):** _____

_____

7. **Relationship of the accused perpetrator to the victim:** _____
8. **Date(s) and times(s) of incident(s) (if known):** _____

_____

10. **Location of incident(s):** _____

In your own words, briefly describe the incident(s):

_____

_____

_____

_____

This is to certify that the information provided on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and recollection, and that the individual named above in Item 2 is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. I acknowledge that submission of false information could jeopardize program eligibility and could be the basis for denial of admission, termination of assistance, or eviction.

Signature_Signed on (Date) _____

Public Reporting Burden: The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response. This includes the time for collecting, reviewing, and reporting the data. The information provided is to be used by the housing provider to request certification that the applicant or tenant is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The information is subject to the confidentiality requirements of VAWA. This agency may not collect this information, and you are not required to complete this form, unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget control number.

Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA)

Model Emergency Transfer Plan for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking

Emergency Transfers

Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) is concerned about the safety of its tenants, and such concern extends to tenants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. In accordance with the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA),[1] OHFA allows tenants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to request an emergency transfer from the tenant's current unit to another unit. The ability to request a transfer is available regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.[2] The ability of OHFA to honor such request for tenants currently receiving assistance, however, may depend upon a preliminary determination that the tenant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

This plan identifies tenants who are eligible for an emergency transfer, the documentation needed to request an emergency transfer, confidentiality protections, how an emergency transfer may occur, and guidance to tenants on safety and security. This plan is based on a model emergency transfer plan published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Federal agency that oversees that the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program complies with VAWA.

Eligibility for Emergency Transfers

A tenant who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, as provided in HUD's regulations at 24 CFR part 5, subpart L is eligible for an emergency transfer, if: the tenant reasonably believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence if the tenant remains within the same unit. If the tenant is a victim of sexual assault, the tenant may also be eligible to transfer if the sexual assault occurred on the premises within the 90-calendar-day period preceding a request for an emergency transfer.
A tenant requesting an emergency transfer must expressly request the transfer in accordance with the procedures described in this plan.
Tenants who are not in good standing may still request an emergency transfer if they meet the eligibility requirements in this section.

---

[1] Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available to all victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

[2] Housing providers cannot discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic, including race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, or age. HUD-assisted and HUD-insured housing must be made available to all otherwise eligible individuals regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.

Emergency Transfer Request Documentation

To request an emergency transfer, OHFA requires submission of the Emergency Transfer Request for Certain Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking Form HUD-5383. OHFA will provide reasonable accommodations to this policy for individuals with disabilities.

Confidentiality

OHFA will keep confidential any information that the tenant submits in requesting an emergency transfer, and information about the emergency transfer, unless the tenant gives OHFA written permission to release the information on a time limited basis, or disclosure of the information is required by law or required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance from the covered program. This includes keeping confidential the new location of the dwelling unit of the tenant, if one is provided, from the person(s) that committed an act(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against the tenant. See the Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence Against Women Act for more information about OHFA's responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of information related to incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Emergency Transfer Timing and Availability

OHFA cannot guarantee that a transfer request will be approved or how long it will take to process a transfer request. OHFA will act promptly to issue a Housing Choice Voucher to allow a family to move after receiving the necessary documentation that includes at a minimum the following:

1. Emergency Transfer Request For Certain Victims Of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, And Stalking Form HUD-5383
2. Documentation that you are a victim

Transfers are also subject to the tenant locating an available and safe unit. If a tenant reasonably believes a proposed transfer would not be safe, the tenant may request a transfer to a different unit. If a unit is available, the transferred tenant must agree to abide by the terms and conditions that govern occupancy in the new unit. OHFA may be unable to transfer a tenant to a particular unit if the tenant has not or cannot establish eligibility for that unit.

OHFA will assist the tenant in identifying other housing providers who may have safe and available units to which the tenant could move. At the tenant's request, OHFA will also assist tenants in contacting the local organizations offering assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that are included in this plan.

Safety and Security of Tenants

Pending processing of the transfer and the actual transfer, if it is approved and occurs, the tenant is urged to take all reasonable precautions to be safe.

Tenants who are or have been victims of domestic violence are encouraged to contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233, or a local domestic violence shelter, for assistance in creating a safety plan. For persons with hearing impairments, that hotline can be accessed by calling 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

Tenants who have been victims of sexual assault may call the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network's National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE, or visit the online hotline at https://ohl.rainn.org/online.

Tenants who are or have been victims of stalking seeking help may visit the National Center for Victims of Crime's Stalking Resource Center at https://www.victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center.

Local Resources

For help regarding sexual assault and/or stalking, you may contact the Oklahoma Safeline at 1-800-522-7233 or visit http://ocadvsa.org/local-resources or call 211.

Please contact the following resources for assistance:

Oklahoma Attorney General https://www.ok.gov/oag/Public_Safety/Victim_Services/

YWCA Oklahoma City – Domestic Violence Hotline: 405-917-9922 or Sexual Assault Hotline: 405-943-7273
http://www.ywcaokc.org/site/c.7oJELRPuFgJYG/b.8331203/k.794A/Domestic_Violence_Services.htm

Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma, Inc. www.legalaidok.org

Oklahoma Department of Human Services
http://www.okdhs.org/purpleribbon/whatis/Pages/whatis.aspx

EXHIBIT 16-4

EMERGENCY TRANSFER REQUEST FOR CERTAIN VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

OMB Approval No. 2577-0286
Exp. 06/30/2017

Purpose of Form: If you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and you are seeking an emergency transfer, you may use this form to request an emergency transfer and certify that you meet the requirements of eligibility for an emergency transfer under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Although the statutory name references women, VAWA rights and protections apply to all victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. Using this form does not necessarily mean that you will receive an emergency transfer. See your housing provider's emergency transfer plan for more information about the availability of emergency transfers.

The requirements you must meet are:

(1) You are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. If your housing provider does not already have documentation that you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, your housing provider may ask you for such documentation. In response, you may submit Form HUD-5382, or any one of the other types of documentation listed on that Form.

(2) You expressly request the emergency transfer. Submission of this form confirms that you have expressly requested a transfer. Your housing provider may choose to require that you submit this form, or may accept another written or oral request. Please see your housing provider's emergency transfer plan for more details.

(3) You reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your current unit. This means you have a reason to fear that if you do not receive a transfer you would suffer violence in the very near future.

OR

You are a victim of sexual assault and the assault occurred on the premises during the 90-calendar-day period before you request a transfer. If you are a victim of sexual assault, then in addition to qualifying for an emergency transfer because you reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your unit, you may qualify for an emergency transfer if the sexual assault occurred on the premises of the property from which you are seeking your transfer, and that assault happened within the 90-calendar-day period before you submit this form or otherwise expressly request the transfer.

Submission of Documentation: If you have third-party documentation that demonstrates why you are eligible for an emergency transfer, you should submit that documentation to your housing provider if it is safe for you to do so. Examples of third party documentation include, but are not limited to: a letter or other documentation from a victim service provider, social worker, legal assistance provider, pastoral counselor, mental health provider, or other professional from whom you have sought assistance; a current restraining order; a recent court order or other court records; a law enforcement report or records; communication records from the perpetrator of the violence or family members or friends of the perpetrator of the violence, including emails, voicemails, text messages, and social media posts.

Confidentiality: All information provided to your housing provider concerning the incident(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and concerning your request for an emergency transfer shall be kept confidential. Such details shall not be entered into any shared database. Employees of your housing provider are not to have access to these details unless to grant or deny VAWA protections or an emergency transfer to you. Such employees may not disclose this information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that disclosure is: (i) consented to by you in writing in a time-limited release; (ii) required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance; or (iii) otherwise required by applicable law.

TO BE COMPLETED BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE PERSON REQUESTING A TRANSFER

1. Name of victim requesting an emergency transfer: _____

2. Your name (if different from victim's)_____

3. Name(s) of other family member(s) listed on the lease:_____

_____

4. Name(s) of other family member(s) who would transfer with the victim:_____

_____

5. Address of location from which the victim seeks to transfer: _____

6. Address or phone number for contacting the victim:_____

7. Name of the accused perpetrator (if known and can be safely disclosed):_____

8. Relationship of the accused perpetrator to the victim:_____

9. Date(s), Time(s) and location(s) of incident(s):_____

_____

10. Is the person requesting the transfer a victim of a sexual assault that occurred in the past 90 days on the premises of the property from which the victim is seeking a transfer? If yes, skip question 11. If no, fill out question 11. _____

11. Describe why the victim believes they are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if they remain in their current unit.

_____

_____

12. If voluntarily provided, list any third-party documentation you are providing along with this notice: _____

This is to certify that the information provided on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and that the individual named above in Item 1 meets the requirement laid out on this form for an emergency transfer. I acknowledge that submission of false information could jeopardize program eligibility and could be the basis for denial of admission, termination of assistance, or eviction.

Signature _____Signed on (Date) _____

Chapter 17

FAMILY SELF SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM

[24 CFR 984]

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations and Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) administrative policies and practices for the Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program. The FSS program was established in 1990 by section 554 of the National Affordable Housing Act. It is a successor program to project self-sufficiency and operation bootstrap.

The purpose of the FSS program is to promote the development of local strategies to coordinate the use of housing assistance under the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program with public and private resources to enable families eligible to receive assistance under the HCV program to achieve economic independence and self-sufficiency.

The FSS policies are discussed in two parts as described below:

> Part I: Services Provided and Eligible Families. This part describes the types of services provided and eligibility policies, and the maximum number of program participants.
>
> Part II: Contract of Participation and Escrow Accounts. This part describes OHFA's requirements and policies with regard to each FSS family's rights and responsibilities to fulfill their obligations and escrow deposit information.

PART I: SERVICES PROVIDED AND ELIGIBLE FAMILIES

17-I.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR 984.101]

The objective of the FSS program is to reduce the dependency of low-income families on welfare assistance. Under the FSS program, families are provided the opportunities for education, job training, counseling, and other forms of social service assistance, while living in assisted housing, so that they may obtain the education, employment, and business and social skills necessary to achieve self-sufficiency.

The FSS program offers participating families a way to build assets through establishment of an escrow account.

17-I.B. SERVICES PROVIDED [24 CFR 984]

FSS program services may include, but are not limited to services for/referrals to:

- Childcare
- Transportation
- Education
- Job Training & Employment Counseling
- Substance/Alcohol Abuse Treatment or counseling
- Household Skills and Management
- Money Management
- Homeownership Counseling

17-I.C. ELIGIBLE FAMILIES [24 CFR 984.103]

OHFA HCV participants in good standing are eligible to apply for the FSS program. Families living in OHFA's jurisdiction under a portability arrangement may also be eligible to apply under certain conditions. Participation in OHFA's FSS program is voluntary. However, families interested in participating in OHFA's HCV Homeownership program must participate in OHFA's FSS program.

OHFA will not allow more than 600 families to participate in the FSS program at any one time.

HCV participants who have previously participated in OHFA's FSS program are not eligible.

PART II: CONTRACT OF PARTICIPATION AND ESCROW ACCOUNTS

17-II.A. CONTRACT OF PARTICIPATION [24 CFR 984.303]

Each family that is selected to participate in the FSS program must enter into a Contract of Participation (COP) with OHFA. The FSS COP sets forth the terms and conditions governing participation in the FSS program, including the rights and responsibilities of the FSS family and the activities to be completed by the head of household and each adult member of the family who elects to participate in the program. The individual training and services plan, incorporated in the COP, shall establish specific interim and final goals, by which OHFA and the family, may measure the family's progress toward fulfilling its obligations under the COP and becoming self-sufficient. For each participating family that is a recipient of welfare assistance, OHFA will establish as an interim goal that the family become independent from welfare assistance and remain independent from welfare assistance at least one year before the expiration of the term of the COP, including any extension thereof. OHFA and the FSS family may mutually agree to modify the COP.

The COP shall provide that each FSS family will be required to fulfill those obligations to which the participating family has committed itself under the COP no later than 5 years after the effective date of the contract. OHFA may grant a contract extension to an FSS family, upon written request by the head of household, for good cause (circumstances beyond the control of the FSS family, as determined by OHFA, such as serious illness or involuntary loss of employment.

The COP is considered to be completed, and a family's participation in the FSS program is considered to be concluded when one of the following occurs:

(1) The FSS family has fulfilled all of its obligations under the COP on or before the expiration of the contract term, including any extension thereof; or

(2) 30 percent of the monthly-adjusted income of the FSS family equals or exceeds the published existing housing FMR for the size of the unit for which the FSS family qualifies based on OHFA's occupancy standards. The COP will be considered completed and the family's participation in the FSS program concluded on this basis even though the contract term, including any extension thereof, has not expired, and the family members who have individual training and services plans have not completed all the activities set forth in their plans.

The COP will automatically terminate for the following reasons:

(1) If the family's HCV assistance is terminated in accordance with HUD requirements;

(2) Mutual consent of OHFA and the family;

(3) The failure of the FSS family to meet its obligations under the COP without good cause, including because the family moved outside OHFA's jurisdiction

(4) Other acts deemed inconsistent with the purpose of the FSS program; or

(5) Operation of law.

17-II.B. ESCROW ACCOUNT [24 CFR 984.103]

An escrow account shall be established for each family who receives employment income. OHFA shall begin making monthly deposits to a participating family's escrow account when the family's employment income increases beyond the amount of employment income the family was receiving on the effective date of the COP. OHFA shall continue to make monthly deposits to a participating family's escrow account until (1) the family's employment income decreases below the amount of employment income the family was receiving on the effective date of the COP; or (2) the COP has been successfully completed; or (3) the COP is terminated.

Once a family successfully completes their COP, the family shall receive the accumulation of escrow funds, including interest. Upon the head of household's written request, OHFA may grant an interim withdrawal from an escrow account for good cause, as determined by OHFA. **Only one interim withdrawal may be granted during the term of the COP.**

A participating FSS family has no right to any of the funds in the escrow account until after successful completion of the COP. If a family fails to successfully complete their COP or if a family's HCV assistance is terminated for family non-compliance, all funds in the family's escrow account will be forfeited.

CHAPTER 18

EMERGENCY HOUSING VOUCHERS (EHVs)

INTRODUCTION

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) (P.L. 117-2). Section 3202 of the ARP appropriated $5 billion for the creation, administration, and renewal of new incremental emergency housing vouchers (EHVs) and other eligible expenses related to COVID-19.

On May 5, 2021, HUD issued Notice PIH 2021-15, which described HUD's process for allocating approximately 70,000 EHVs to eligible Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) and set forth the operating requirements for PHAs who administer them. Based on criteria outlined in the notice, HUD notified eligible PHAs of the number of EHVs allocated to their agency, and PHAs were able to accept or decline the invitation to participate in the program.

PHAs may not project-base EHVs; EHVs are exclusively tenant-based assistance.

All applicable nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements apply to the EHV program, including requirements that the PHA grant reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities, effectively communicate with persons with disabilities, and ensure meaningful access for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP).

This chapter describes HUD regulations and PHA policies for administering EHVs. The policies outlined in this chapter are organized into seven sections, as follows:

Part I: Funding

Part II: Partnering Agencies

Part III: Waiting List Management

Part IV: Family Eligibility

Part V: Housing Search and Leasing

Part VI: Use of Funds, Reporting, and Financial Records

Except as addressed by this chapter and as required under federal statute and HUD requirements, the general requirements of the HCV program apply to EHVs.

PART I: FUNDING

EHV-I.A. FUNDING OVERVIEW

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) provides administrative fees and funding for the costs of administering emergency housing vouchers (EHVs) and other eligible expenses defined in Notice PIH 2021-15. These fees may only be used for EHV administration and other eligible expenses and must not be used for or applied to other PHA programs or vouchers. OHFA must maintain separate financial records from its regular HCV funding for all EHV funding.

Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Funding

ARP funding obligated to OHFA as housing assistance payments (HAP) funding may only be used for eligible EHV HAP expenses (i.e., rental assistance payments). EHV HAP funding may not be used for EHV administrative expenses or for the eligible uses under the EHV services fee.

The initial funding term will expire December 31, 2022. HUD will provide renewal funding to OHFA for the EHVs on a calendar year (CY) basis commencing with CY 2023. The renewal funding allocation will be based on OHFA's actual EHV HAP costs in leasing, similar to the renewal process for the regular HCV program. EHV renewal funding is not part of the annual HCV renewal funding formula; EHVs are renewed separately from the regular HCV program. All renewal funding for the duration of the EHV program has been appropriated as part of the ARP funding.

Administrative Fee and Funding

The following four types of fees and funding are allocated as part of the EHV program:

- **Preliminary fees** support immediate start-up costs that OHFA will incur in implementing alternative requirements under EHV, such as outreach and coordination with partnering agencies:
  - $400 per EHV allocated to OHFA, once the consolidated annual contributions contract (CACC) is amended.
  - This fee may be used for any eligible administrative expenses related to EHVs.
  - The fee may also be used to pay for any eligible activities under EHV service fees (EHV-I.B).

- **Placement fees/expedited issuance reporting fees** will support initial lease-up costs and the added cost and effort required to expedite leasing of EHVs:
  - $100 for each EHV initially leased, if OHFA reports the voucher issuance date in Public Housing Information Center–Next Generation (PIC–NG) system within 14 days of voucher issuance or the date the system becomes available for reporting.
  - Placement fees:
    - $500 for each EHV family placed under a HAP contract effective within four months of the effective date of the ACC funding increment; or
    - $250 for each EHV family placed under a HAP contract effective after four months but less than six months after the effective date of the ACC funding increment.
    - HUD will determine placement fees in the event of multiple EHV allocations and funding increment effective dates.
  - Placement/expedited issuance fees only apply to the initial leasing of the voucher; they are not paid for family moves or to turnover vouchers.
- **Ongoing administrative fees,** which are calculated in the same way as the standard HCV program:
  - PHAs are allocated administrative fees using the full column A administrative fee amount for each EHV under contract as of the first day of each month.
  - Ongoing EHV administrative fees may be subject to proration in future years, based on available EHV funding.
- **Services fees,** which are a one-time fee to support PHAs' efforts to implement and operate an effective EHV services program in its jurisdiction (EHV-I.B):
  - The fee is allocated once OHFA's CACC is amended to reflect EHV funding.
  - The amount allocated is $3,500 for each EHV allocated.

EHV-I.B. SERVICE FEES

Services fee funding must be initially used for defined eligible uses and not for other administrative expenses of operating the EHV program. Service fees fall into four categories:

- Housing search assistance
- Security deposit/utility deposit/rental application/holding fee uses
- Owner-related uses
- Other eligible uses such as moving expenses or tenant-readiness services

OHFA must establish the eligible uses and the parameters and requirements for service fees in OHFA's administrative plan.

The eligible uses for service fees include:

Housing search assistance, which may include activities such as, but not limited to, helping a family identify and visit potentially available units during their housing search, helping to find a unit that meets the household's disability-related needs, providing transportation and directions, assisting with the completion of rental applications and PHA forms, and helping to expedite the EHV leasing process for the family.

Application fees/non-refundable administrative or processing fees/refundable application deposit assistance. OHFA may choose to assist the family with some or all these expenses.

Security deposit assistance. The amount of the security deposit assistance may not exceed the lesser of one months' rent to owner, the maximum security deposit allowed under applicable state and/or local law, or the actual security deposit required by the owner. OHFA will pay the security deposit assistance directly to the owner.

Utility deposit assistance/utility arrears. OHFA may provide utility deposit assistance for some or all of the family's utility deposit expenses. Assistance can be provided for deposits (including connection fees) required for the utilities to be supplied by the tenant under the lease. OHFA will pay the utility deposit assistance directly to the utility company. OHFA will require the utility supplier or family to return the utility deposit assistance to OHFA at such time the deposit is returned by the utility supplier (less any amounts retained by the utility supplier). In addition, some families may have large balances with gas, electric, water, sewer, or trash companies that will make it difficult if not impossible to establish services for tenant-supplied utilities. OHFA may also provide the family with assistance up to $750 to help address these utility arrears to facilitate leasing. Utility deposit assistance returned to OHFA will be used for either services fee eligible uses or other EHV administrative costs, as required by HUD.

Owner recruitment and outreach for EHVs. OHFA may use the service fee funding to conduct owner recruitment and outreach specifically for EHVs. In addition to traditional owner recruitment and outreach, activities may include conducting pre-inspections or otherwise expediting the inspection process, providing enhanced customer service, and offering owner incentive and/or retention payments.

Owner incentive payments. OHFA may make up to a $350 incentive payment to owners that agree to lease their unit to an EHV family. The incentive payment will be paid within 90 days after the unit passes the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection and the housing assistance payments (HAP) contract and the lease have been executed and the EHV family still occupies the unit, and it continues to comply with HQS requirements.

Payments will be made as a single payment at the beginning of the assisted lease term as described above. Owner incentive payments are not housing assistance payments, are not part of the rent to owner, and are not taken into consideration when determining whether the rent for the unit is reasonable.

Moving expenses (including move-in fees and deposits). OHFA may provide assistance for some or all of the family's reasonable moving expenses when they initially lease a unit with the EHV. OHFA will not provide moving expenses assistance for subsequent moves unless the family is required to move for reasons other than something the family did or failed to do (e.g., OHFA is terminating the HAP contract because the owner did not fulfill the owner responsibilities under the HAP contract or the owner is refusing to offer the family the opportunity to enter a new lease after the initial lease term, as opposed to the family choosing to terminate the tenancy in order to move to another unit), or a family has to move due to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Tenant-readiness services. OHFA may use fees to help create a customized plan to address or mitigate barriers that individual families may face in renting a unit with an EHV, such as negative credit, lack of credit, negative rental or utility history, or to connect the family to other community resources (including COVID-related resources) that can assist with rental arrears.

Essential household items. OHFA may use services fee funding up to $1,000 to assist the family with some or all of the costs of acquiring essential household items such as tableware, cooking equipment, beds or bedding, and essential sanitary products such as soap and toiletries.

Renter's insurance if required by the lease. OHFA may choose to assist the family with some or all this cost.

EHV eligible individuals or families may use up to a maximum amount of $3500 in OHFA eligible services fee categories, if necessary to secure housing. Any services fee assistance that is returned to OHFA after its initial or subsequent use may only be applied to the eligible services fee uses defined in Notice PIH 2021-15 (or subsequent notice) or other EHV administrative costs. Any amounts not expended for these eligible uses when OHFA's EHV program ends must be remitted to HUD.

PART II: PARTNERING AGENCIES

EHV-II.A. CONTINUUM OF CARE (CoC)

PHAs that accept an allocation of EHVs are required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Continuum of Care (CoC) entities to establish a partnership for the administration of EHVs.

OHFA will enter into MOUs with Continuum of Care (CoC) agencies, as applicable.

EHV-II.B. OTHER PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS

OHFA may, but is not required to, partner with other organizations serving persons experiencing homelessness, such as victim services providers (VSPs) and other community partners. If OHFA chooses to partner with such agencies, OHFA must either enter into an MOU with the partnering agency or the partnering agency may be added to the MOU between OHFA and a CoC.

OHFA may partner with other organizations serving persons experiencing homelessness, such as, homeless shelters, victim services providers (VSPs) and other community partners. If OHFA chooses to partner with such agencies, OHFA must either enter into an MOU with the partnering agency or the partnering agency may be added to the MOU between OHFA and a CoC.

EHV-II.C. REFERRALS

CoC and Partnering Agency Referrals

The primary responsibility of the CoC under the MOU with OHFA is to make direct referrals of qualifying individuals and families to OHFA. OHFA must generally refer a family that is seeking EHV assistance directly from OHFA to the CoC or other referring agency for initial intake, assessment, and possible referral for EHV assistance. Partner CoCs are responsible for determining whether the family qualifies under one of the four eligibility categories for EHVs. The CoC or other direct referral partner must provide supporting documentation to OHFA of the referring agency's verification that the family meets one of the four eligible categories for EHV assistance.

The CoC or partnering agency must establish and implement a system to identify EHV-eligible individuals and families within the agency's caseload and make referrals to OHFA. The CoC or other partnering agency must certify that the EHV applicants they refer to OHFA meet at least one of the four EHV eligibility criteria. OHFA will maintain a copy of the referral or certification from the CoC or other partnering agency in the participant's file along with other eligibility paperwork. Homeless service providers are required to use the OHFA certification form. Victim services providers are required to use the OHFA certification form when identifying eligible families who qualify as victims of human trafficking.

As part of the MOU, OHFA and CoC or other partnering agency will identify staff positions to serve as lead EHV liaisons. These positions or liaison designee will be responsible for transmission and acceptance of referrals. The CoC or partnering agency must commit sufficient staff and resources to ensure eligible individuals and families are identified and determined eligible in a timely manner.

OHFA's liaison responsible for acceptance of referrals may contact the CoC or partnering agency liaison via email to request EHV referrals. No more than five business days from the date the CoC or partnering agency receives this notification, the CoC or partnering agency liaison will provide OHFA with a list of eligible referrals including the name, address, and contact phone number for each adult individual who is being referred; a completed release form for each adult family member; and a written certification for each referral indicating they are EHV-eligible.

Offers of Assistance with CoC Referral

OHFA may make an EHV available without a referral from the CoC or other partnering organization in order to facilitate an emergency transfer under VAWA in accordance with OHFA's Emergency Transfer Plan (ETP) in Chapter 16.

OHFA may also take direct referrals from outside the CoC if:

- The CoC does not have a sufficient number of eligible families to refer to OHFA; or
- The CoC does not identify families that may be eligible for EHV assistance because they are fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking.

If at any time OHFA is not receiving enough referrals or is not receiving referrals in a timely manner from the CoC or other partner referral agencies (or OHFA and CoC cannot identify any such alternative referral partner agencies), HUD may permit OHFA on a temporary or permanent basis to take EHV applications directly from applicants and admit eligible families to the EHV program in lieu of or in addition to direct referrals in those circumstances.

PART III: WAITING LIST MANAGEMENT

EHV-III. A. HCV WAITING LIST

The regulation that requires OHFA to admit applicants as waiting list admissions or special admissions in accordance with admission policies in Chapter 4 does not apply to PHAs operating the EHV program. Direct referrals are not added to OHFA's HCV waiting list.

OHFA must inform families on the HCV waiting list of the availability of EHVs by, at a minimum, either by posting the information to their website or providing public notice in their respective communities in accordance with the requirements listed in Notice PIH 2021-15.

OHFA will post information about the EHV program for families on OHFA's HCV waiting list on their website. The notice will:

Describe the eligible populations to which EHVs are limited

Clearly state that the availability of these EHVs is managed through a direct referral process

Advise the family to contact the CoC (or any other PHA referral partner, if applicable) if the family believes they may be eligible for EHV assistance

OHFA will ensure effective communication with persons with disabilities, including those with vision, hearing, and other communication-related disabilities in accordance with Chapter 2. OHFA will also take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) in accordance with Chapter 2.

EHV-III.B. EHV WAITING LIST

The HCV regulations requiring OHFA to operate a single waiting list for admission to the HCV program do not apply to PHAs operating the EHV program. Instead, when the number of applicants referred by the CoC or partnering agency exceeds the EHVs available, OHFA must maintain a separate waiting list for EHV referrals, both at initial leasing and for any turnover vouchers that may be issued prior to September 30, 2023.

Further, the EHV waiting list is not subject to PHA policies in Chapter 4 regarding opening and closing the HCV waiting list. OHFA will work directly with its CoC and other referral agency partners to manage the number of referrals and the size of the EHV waiting list. EHVs are available on a first come, first served basis.

EHV-III.C. PREFERENCES

HCV Waiting List Preferences

If local preferences are established by OHFA for HCV, they do not apply to EHVs. However, if OHFA has a homeless preference or a VAWA preference for the HCV waiting list, OHFA must adopt additional policies related to EHVs in accordance with Notice PIH 2021-15.

OHFA does offer a homeless and a VAWA preference for the HCV waiting list and will apply these preferences to the EHV waiting list.

EHV Waiting List Preferences

With the exception of a residency preference, OHFA may choose, in coordination with the CoC and other referral partners, to establish separate local preferences for EHVs. OHFA may, however, choose to not establish any local preferences for the EHV waiting list.

No local preferences have been established for the EHV waiting list.

PART IV: FAMILY ELIGIBLTY

EHV-IV.A. OVERVIEW

The CoC or referring agency determines whether the individual or family meets any one of the four eligibility criteria described in Notice PIH 2021-15 and then refers the family to OHFA. OHFA determines that the family meets other eligibility criteria for the HCV program, as modified for the EHV program and outlined below.

EHV-IV.B. REFERRING AGENCY DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBLITY

In order to be eligible for an EHV, an individual or family must meet one of four eligibility criteria:

- Homeless as defined in 24 CFR 578.3;
- At risk of homelessness as defined in 24 CFR 578.3;
- Fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking (as defined in Notice PIH 2021-15), or human trafficking (as defined in the 22 U.S.C. Section 7102); or
- Recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability as determined by the CoC or its designee in accordance with the definition in Notice PIH 2021-15.

As applicable, the CoC or referring agency must provide documentation to OHFA of the referring agency's verification that the family meets one of the four eligible categories for EHV assistance. OHFA must retain this documentation as part of the family's file.

EHV-IV.C. PHA SCREENING

Overview

HUD waived 24 CFR 982.552 and 982.553 in part for the EHV applicants and established alternative requirement for mandatory and permissive prohibitions of admissions. Except where applicable, PHA policies regarding denials in Chapter 3 of this policy do not apply to screening individuals and families for eligibility for an EHV. Instead, the EHV alternative requirement listed in this section will apply to all EHV applicants.

The mandatory and permissive prohibitions listed in Notice PIH 2021-15 and in this chapter, however, apply only when screening the individual or family for eligibility for an EHV. When adding a family member after the family has been placed under a HAP contract with EHV assistance, the regulations at 24 CFR 982.551(h)(2) apply. Other than the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child, OHFA must approve additional family members and may apply its regular HCV screening criteria in Chapter 3 in doing so.

Mandatory Denials

Under alternative requirements for the EHV program, mandatory denials for EHV applicants include:

- 24 CFR 982.553(a)(1)(ii)(C), which prohibits admission if any household member has ever been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.
- 24 CFR 982.553(a)(2)(i), which prohibits admission to the program if any member of the household is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program.

OHFA must deny admission to the program if any member of the family fails to sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information as required by 24 CFR 982.552(b)(3) but should notify the family of the limited EHV grounds for denial of admission first.

> While OHFA will deny admission to the program if any adult member (or head of household or spouse, regardless of age) fails to sign and submit consent forms, OHFA will first notify the family of the limited EHV grounds for denial of admission as part of the notice of denial that will be mailed to the family.

Permissive Denial

Notice PIH 2021-15 lists permissive prohibitions for which OHFA may, but is not required to, deny admission to EHV families. The notice also lists prohibitions that, while allowable under the HCV program, may not be used to deny assistance for EHV families.

If OHFA intends to establish permissive prohibition policies for EHV applicants, OHFA must first consult with its CoC partner to understand the impact that the proposed prohibitions may have on referrals and must take the CoC's recommendations into consideration.

In consultation with the CoC, OHFA will apply permissive prohibition to the screening of EHV applicants. Determinations using permissive prohibitions will be made based on an individualized assessment of relevant mitigating information in accordance with policies in Section 3-III.E.

OHFA will establish the following permissive prohibitions:

If OHFA determines that any household member is currently engaged in, or has engaged in within the previous 12 months:

Violent criminal activity

Other criminal activity that may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or persons residing in the immediate vicinity

If any member of the family has committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program within the previous 12 months.

If the family engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior toward OHFA personnel within the previous 12 months.

OHFA will also deny assistance to household members already receiving assistance from another program in accordance with Section 9.h. of Notice PIH 2021-15.

Prohibitions based on criminal activity for the eligible EHV populations regarding drug possession will be considered apart from criminal activity against persons (i.e., violent criminal activity).

In compliance with PIH 2021-15, OHFA **will not** deny an EHV applicant admission regardless of whether:

Any member of the family has been evicted from federally assisted housing in the last five years;

A PHA has ever terminated assistance under the program for any member of the family;

The family currently owes rent or other amounts to OHFA 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 breached an agreement with the PHA to pay amounts owed to a PHA, or amounts paid to an owner by a PHA;

The family would otherwise be prohibited admission under alcohol abuse standards established by OHFA in accordance with 24 CFR 982.553(a)(3);

OHFA determines that any household member is currently engaged in or has engaged in during a reasonable time before the admission, drug-related criminal activity.

EHV-IV.D. INCOME VERIFICATION AT ADMISSION

Self-Certification at Admission

The requirement to obtain third-party verification of income in accordance with Notice PIH 2018-18 does not apply to the EHV program applicants at admission, and alternatively, OHFA may consider self-certification the highest form of income verification at admission. As such, OHFA policies related to the verification of income in Section 7-I.B. do not apply to EHV families at admission. Instead, applicants must submit an affidavit attesting to their reported income, assets, expenses, and other factors that would affect an income eligibility determination.

Additionally, applicants may provide third-party documentation that represents the applicant's income within the 60-day period prior to admission or voucher issuance but is not dated within 60 days of OHFA's request.

> Any documents used for verification must be the original (not photocopies) and dated within the 60-day period prior to admission. The documents must not be damaged, altered, or in any way illegible.
>
> Printouts from webpages are considered original documents.
>
> Any family self-certifications must be made in a format acceptable to OHFA and must be signed by the family member whose information or status is being verified.
>
> OHFA will incorporate additional procedures to remind families of the obligation to provide true and complete information in accordance with Chapter 14. OHFA will address any material discrepancies (i.e., unreported income or a substantial difference in reported income) that may arise later. OHFA may, but is not required to, offer the family a repayment agreement in accordance with Chapter 16. If the family fails to repay the excess subsidy, OHFA will terminate the family's assistance in accordance with the policies in Chapter 12.

Recently Conducted Income Determinations

OHFA may accept income calculations and verifications from third-party providers or from an examination that OHFA conducted on behalf of the family for another subsidized housing program in lieu of conducting an initial examination of income as long as:

- The income was calculated in accordance with rules outlined at 24 CFR Part 5 and within the last six months; and
- The family certifies there has been no change in income or family composition in the interim.

OHFA will accept income calculations and verifications from third-party providers provided they meet the criteria outlined above.

The family certification must be made in a format acceptable to OHFA and must be signed by all adult family members whose information or status is being verified.

At the time of the family's annual reexamination OHFA must conduct the annual reexamination of income as outlined at 24 CFR 982.516 and OHFA policies in Chapter 11.

EIV Income Validation

Once HUD makes the EIV data available to PHAs under this waiver and alternative requirement, OHFA must:

- Review the EIV Income and Income Validation Tool (IVT) reports to confirm and validate family-reported income within 90 days of the PIC submission date;
- Print and maintain copies of the EIV Income and IVT Reports in the tenant file; and
- Resolve any income discrepancy with the family within 60 days of the EIV Income or IVT Report dates.

Prior to admission, PHAs must continue to use HUD's EIV system to search for all household members using the Existing Tenant Search in accordance with OHFA policies in Chapter 3.

If OHFA later determines that an ineligible family received assistance, OHFA must take steps to terminate that family from the program in accordance with Chapter 12.

EHV-IV.E. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER AND CITIZENSHIP STATUS VERIFICATION

For the EHV program, OHFA is not required to obtain and verify SSN documentation and documentation evidencing eligible noncitizen status before admitting the family to the EHV program. Instead, OHFA may adopt policies to admit EHV applicants who are unable to provide the required SSN or citizenship documentation during the initial eligibility determination. As an alternative requirement, such individuals must provide the required documentation within 180 days of admission to be eligible for continued assistance, pending verification, unless OHFA provides an extension based on evidence from the family or confirmation from the CoC or other partnering agency that the family has made a good-faith effort to obtain the documentation.

If OHFA determines that an ineligible family received assistance, OHFA must take steps to terminate that family from the program.

OHFA will admit EHV applicants who are unable to provide the required SSN or citizenship documentation during the initial eligibility determination. These individuals must provide the required documentation in accordance with policies in Chapter 7 within 180 days of admission. OHFA may provide an additional 60-day extension based on evidence from the family or confirmation from the CoC or other partnering agency that the family has made a good-faith effort to obtain the documentation.

If OHFA determines that an ineligible family received assistance, OHFA will take steps to terminate that family from the program in accordance with policies in Chapter 12.

EHV-IV.F. AGE AND DISABILITY VERIFICATION

OHFA may accept self-certification of date of birth and disability status if a higher level of verification is not immediately available. If self-certification is used, OHFA must obtain a higher level of verification within 90 days of admission or verify the information in EIV.

If OHFA determines that an ineligible family received assistance, OHFA must take steps to terminate that family from the program.

OHFA will accept self-certification of date of birth and disability status if a higher form of verification is not immediately available. The certification must be made in a format acceptable to OHFA and must be signed by the family member whose information or status is being verified. If self-certification is accepted, within 90 days of admission, OHFA will verify the information in EIV or through other third-party verification if the information is not available in EIV. OHFA will note the family's file that self-certification was used as initial verification and include an EIV printout or other third-party verification confirming the applicant's date of birth and/or disability status.

If OHFA determines that an ineligible family received assistance, OHFA will take steps to terminate that family from the program in accordance with policies in Chapter 12.

EHV-IV.G. INCOME TARGETING

OHFA must determine income eligibility for EHV families in accordance with 24 CFR 982.201 and in Chapter 3; however, income targeting requirements do not apply for EHV families. OHFA may still choose to include the admission of extremely low-income EHV families in its income targeting numbers for the fiscal year in which these families are admitted.

OHFA will not include the admission of extremely low-income EHV families in its income targeting numbers for the fiscal year in which these families are admitted.

PART V: HOUSING SEARCH AND LEASING

EHV-V.A. INITIAL VOUCHER TERM

Unlike the standard HCV program, which requires an initial voucher term of at least 60 days, EHV vouchers must have an initial search term of at least 120 days. PHA policies on extensions as outlined in Section 5-II.E. will apply.

All EHVs will have an initial term of 120 calendar days.

The family must submit a Scheduling Appointment Request Form within the 120-day period unless OHFA grants an extension.

EHV-V.B. HOUSING SEARCH ASSISTANCE

OHFA must ensure housing search assistance is made available to EHV families during their initial housing search. The housing search assistance may be provided directly by OHFA or through the CoC or another partnering agency or entity.

At a minimum, housing search assistance must:

- Help individual families identify potentially available units during their housing search, including physically accessible units with features for family members with disabilities, as well as units in low-poverty neighborhoods;
- Provide transportation assistance and directions to potential units;
- Conduct owner outreach;
- Assist with the completion of rental applications and OHFA forms; and
- Help expedite the EHV leasing process for the family

As identified in the MOU between OHFA and CoC, the following housing search assistance will be provided to each EHV family:

OHFA will:

Conduct owner outreach in accordance with policies in Chapter 13

Provide information on potential units

Expedite the EHV leasing process for the family to the extent practicable and in accordance with policies in this chapter

At least every 60 days, conduct proactive check-ins via email and telephone with families who are searching with an EHV and remind them of their voucher expiration date

The CoC will:

Help families identify potentially available units during their housing search, including physically accessible units with features for family members with disabilities, as well as units in low-poverty neighborhoods

Provide transportation assistance to potential units

Assist the family with the completion of rental applications and OHFA forms

EHV-V.C. HQS PRE-INSPECTIONS

To expedite the leasing process, OHFA may pre-inspect available units that EHV families may be interested in leasing in order to maintain a pool of eligible units.

To expedite the leasing process, OHFA may pre-inspect available units that EHV families may be interested in leasing to maintain a pool of eligible units. If an EHV family selects a unit that passed a HQS pre-inspection (without intervening occupancy) within 45 days of the date of the Scheduling Appointment Request Form, the unit may be approved provided that it meets all other conditions under 24 CFR 982.305.

The family will be free to select his or her unit.

When a pre-inspected unit is not selected, OHFA will make every effort to fast-track the inspection process, including adjusting the normal inspection schedule for any required reinspections.

EHV-V.D. INITIAL LEASE TERM

Unlike in the standard the HCV program, EHV voucher holders may enter into an initial lease that is for less than 12 months, regardless of the in Section 9-I.E., Term of Assisted Tenancy.

EHV-V.E. PORTABILITY

The normal HCV portability procedures and requirements outlined in Chapter 10 generally apply to EHVs. Exceptions are addressed below.

Nonresident Applicants

Under EHV, applicant families may move under portability even if the family did not have legal residency in the jurisdiction of the initial PHA when they applied, regardless of in Section 10-II.B.

Billing and Absorption

A receiving PHA cannot refuse to assist an incoming EHV family, regardless of whether the PHA administers EHVs under its own ACC.

- If the EHV family moves under portability to another PHA that administers EHVs under its own ACC:
  - The receiving PHA may only absorb the incoming EHV family with an EHV (assuming it has an EHV voucher available to do so).
  - If the PHA does not have an EHV available to absorb the family, it must bill the initial PHA. The receiving PHA must allow the family to lease the unit with EHV assistance and may not absorb the family with a regular HCV when the family leases the unit.
  - Regardless of whether the receiving PHA absorbs or bills the initial PHA for the family's EHV assistance, the EHV administration of the voucher is in accordance with the receiving PHA's EHV policies.
- If the EHV family moves under portability to another PHA that does not administer EHV under its own ACC, the receiving PHA may absorb the family into its regular HCV program or may bill the initial PHA.

Family Briefing

In addition to the applicable family briefing requirements at 24 CFR 982.301(a)(2) as to how portability works and how portability may affect the family's assistance, the initial PHA must inform the family how portability may impact the special EHV services and assistance that may be available to the family.

The initial PHA is required to help facilitate the family's portability move to the receiving PHA and inform the family of this requirement in writing, taking reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP).

> In addition to following on briefings in Chapter 5, as part of the briefing packet for EHV families, OHFA will include a written notice that OHFA will assist the family with moves under portability.
>
> For limited English proficient (LEP) applicants, OHFA will provide interpretation services in accordance with OHFA's LEP plan (See Chapter 2).

Coordination of Services

If the portability move is in connection with the EHV family's initial lease-up, the receiving PHA and the initial PHA must consult and coordinate on the EHV services and assistance that will be made available to the family.

> For EHV families who are exercising portability, when OHFA contacts the receiving PHA in accordance with Section 10-II.B. Preapproval Contact with Receiving PHA, OHFA will consult and coordinate with the receiving PHA to ensure there is no duplication of EHV services and assistance, and ensure the receiving PHA is aware of the maximum amount of services fee funding that the initial PHA may provide to the receiving PHA on behalf of the family.

Services Fee

Standard portability billing arrangements apply for HAP and ongoing administrative fees for EHV families.

For service fees funding, the amount of the service fee provided by the initial PHA may not exceed the lesser of the actual cost of the services and assistance provided to the family by the receiving PHA or $1,750, unless the initial PHA and receiving PHA mutually agree to change the $1,750 cap. Service fees are paid as follows:

- If the receiving PHA, in consultation and coordination with the initial PHA, will provide eligible services or assistance to the incoming EHV family, the receiving PHA may be compensated for those costs by the initial PHA, regardless of whether the receiving PHA bills or absorbs.
- If the receiving PHA administers EHVs, the receiving PHA may use its own services fee and may be reimbursed by the initial PHA, or the initial PHA may provide the services funding upfront to the receiving PHA for those fees and assistance.
- If the receiving PHA does not administer EHVs, the initial PHA must provide the services funding upfront to the receiving PHA. Any amounts provided to the receiving PHA that are not used for services or assistance on behalf of the EHV family must promptly be returned by the receiving PHA to the initial PHA.

Placement Fee/Issuance Reporting Fee

If the portability lease-up qualifies for the placement fee/issuance reporting fee, the receiving PHA receives the full amount of the placement component of the placement fee/issuing reporting fee. The receiving PHA is eligible for the placement fee regardless of whether the receiving PHA bills the initial PHA or absorbs the family into its own program at initial lease-up. The initial PHA qualifies for the issuance reporting component of the placement fee/issuance reporting fee, as applicable.

EHV-V.F. PAYMENT STANDARDS

Payment Standard Schedule

For the EHV program, HUD has waived the regulation requiring a single payment standard for each unit size. Instead, OHFA may, but is not required to, establish separate higher payment standards for EHVs. Lower EHV payment standards are not permitted. If OHFA is increasing the regular HCV payment standard, OHFA must also increase the EHV payment standard if it would be otherwise lower than the new regular HCV payment standard. The separate EHV payment standard must comply with all other HCV requirements with the exception of the alternative requirements discussed below.

Further, if OHFA chooses to establish higher payments standards for EHVs, HUD has provided other regulatory waivers:

- Defining the "basic range" for payment standards as between 90 and 120 percent of the published Fair Market Rent (FMR) for the unit size (rather than 90 to 110 percent).
- Allowing a PHA that is not in a designated Small Area FMR (SAFMR) area or has not opted to voluntarily implement SAFMRs to establish exception payment standards for a ZIP code area above the basic range for the metropolitan FMR based on the HUD published SAFMRs. OHFA may establish an exception payment standard up to 120 percent (as opposed to 110 percent) of the HUD published Small Area FMR for that ZIP code area. The exception payment standard must apply to the entire ZIP code area.
    - OHFA must notify HUD if it establishes an EHV exception payment standard based on the SAFMR.
    - OHFA's EHV payment Standards will be set to equal 120 percent of the published Fair Market Rents (FMRs).

Rent Reasonableness

All rent reasonableness requirements apply to EHV units, regardless of whether OHFA has established an alternative or exception EHV payment standard.

Increases in Payment Standards

The requirement that OHFA apply increased payment standards at the family's first regular recertification on or after the effective date of the increase does not apply to EHV. OHFA may, but is not required to, establish an alternative policy on when to apply the increased payment standard, provided the increased payment standard is used to calculate the HAP no later than the effective date of the family's first regular reexamination following the change.

OHFA will not establish an alternative policy for increases in the payment standard.

EHV-V.G. TERMINATION OF VOUCHERS

After September 30, 2023, a PHA may not reissue EHVs when assistance for an EHV-assisted family ends. This means that when an EHV participant (a family that is receiving rental assistance under a HAP contract) leaves the program for any reason, OHFA may not reissue that EHV to another family unless it does so no later than September 30, 2023.

If an applicant family that was issued the EHV is unsuccessful in finding a unit and the EHV expires after September 30, 2023, the EHV may not be reissued to another family.

All EHVs under lease on or after October 1, 2023, may not under any circumstances be reissued to another family when the participant leaves the program for any reason.

An EHV that has never been issued to a family may be initially issued and leased after September 30, 2023, since this prohibition only applies to EHVs that are being reissued upon turnover after assistance to a family has ended. However, HUD may direct PHAs administering EHVs to cease leasing any unleased EHVs if such action is determined necessary by HUD to ensure there will be sufficient funding available to continue to cover the HAP needs of currently assisted EHV families.

PART VI: USE OF FUNDS, REPORTING, AND FINANCIAL RECORDS

EHV funds allocated to OHFA for HAP (both funding for the initial allocation and HAP renewal funding) may only be used for eligible EHV HAP purposes. EHV HAP funding obligated to OHFA may not be used for EHV administrative expenses or the other EHV eligible expenses under this notice. Likewise, EHV administrative fees and funding obligated to OHFA are to be used for those purposes and must not be used for HAP.

The appropriated funds for EHVs are separate from the regular HCV program and may not be used for the regular HCV program but may only be expended for EHV eligible purposes. EHV HAP funds may not roll into the regular HCV restricted net position (RNP) and must be tracked and accounted for separately as EHV RNP. EHV administrative fees and funding for other eligible expenses permitted by Notice PIH 2021-15 may only be used in support of the EHVs and cannot be used for regular HCVs. EHV funding may not be used for the repayment of debts or any amounts owed to HUD by HUD program participants including, but not limited to, those resulting from Office of Inspector General (OIG), Quality Assurance Division (QAD), or other monitoring review findings.

OHFA must comply with EHV reporting requirements in the Voucher Management System (VMS) and Financial Data Schedule (FDS) as outlined in Notice PIH 2021-15.

OHFA must maintain complete and accurate accounts and other records for the program and provide HUD and the Comptroller General of the United States full and free access to all accounts and records that are pertinent the administration of the EHVs in accordance with the HCV program requirements at 24 CFR 982.158.

GLOSSARY

A. ACRONYMS USED IN THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM

ACC	Annual contributions contract
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
BR	Bedroom
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant (Program)
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations (published federal rules that define and implement laws; commonly referred to as "the regulations")
CPI	Consumer price index (published monthly by the Department of Labor as an inflation indicator)
EIV	Enterprise Income Verification
FDIC	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
FHA	Federal Housing Administration (HUD Office of Housing)
FHEO	Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (HUD Office of)
FICA	Federal Insurance Contributions Act (established Social Security taxes)
FMR	Fair market rent
FR	Federal Register
FSS	Family Self-Sufficiency (Program)
FY	Fiscal year
FYE	Fiscal year end
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GR	Gross rent
HA	Housing authority or housing agency
HAP	Housing assistance payment
HCV	Housing choice voucher
HIP	Housing Information Portal
HOTMA	Housing Opportunity through Modernization Act of 2016
HQS	Housing quality standards
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
HUDCLIPS	HUD Client Information and Policy System

IPA	Independent public accountant
IRA	Individual retirement account
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
IVT	Income Validation Tool
JTPA	Job Training Partnership Act
LBP	Lead-based paint
LEP	Limited English proficiency
MSA	Metropolitan statistical area (established by the U.S. Census Bureau)
MTW	Moving to Work
NOFA	Notice of funding availability
NSPIRE	National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate
OGC	HUD's Office of General Counsel
OIG	HUD's Office of Inspector General
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
PASS	Plan to Achieve Self-Support
PBV	Project-based voucher
PHA	Public housing agency
PIH	(HUD Office of) Public and Indian Housing
PS	Payment standard
QC	Quality control
RAD	Rental Assistance Demonstration Program
REAC	(HUD) Real Estate Assessment Center
RFP	Request for proposals
RFTA	Request for tenancy approval
RIGI	Regional inspector general for investigation (handles fraud and program abuse matters for HUD at the regional office level)
RVI	Remote Video Inspection
SEMAP	Section 8 Management Assessment Program
SRO	Single room occupancy
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSI	Supplemental security income
SWICA	State wage information collection agency

TANF	Temporary assistance for needy families
TPV	Tenant protection vouchers
TR	Tenant rent
TTP	Total tenant payment
UA	Utility allowance
UFAS	Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards
UIV	Upfront income verification
URP	Utility reimbursement payment
VAWA	Violence Against Women Act
VCA	Voluntary Compliance Agreement
VMS	Voucher Management System

B. GLOSSARY OF SUBSIDIZED HOUSING TERMS

Absorption. In portability (under subpart H of this part 982): the point at which a receiving PHA stops billing the initial PHA for assistance on behalf of a portability family. The receiving PHA uses funds available under the receiving PHA consolidated ACC.

Accessible. The facility or portion of the facility can be approached, entered, and used by persons with disabilities.

Adjusted income. Annual income, less allowable HUD deductions and allowances.

Administrative fee. Fee paid by HUD to the PHA for administration of the program. See §982.152.

Administrative plan. The plan that describes PHA policies for administration of the tenant-based programs. The Administrative Plan and any revisions must be approved by the PHA's board and included as a supporting document to the PHA Plan. See §982.54.

Admission. The point when the family becomes a participant in the program. The date used for this purpose is the effective date of the first HAP contract for a family (first day of initial lease term) in a tenant-based program.

Affiliated individual. With respect to an individual, a spouse, parent, brother, sister, or child of that individual, or an individual to whom that individual stands in loco parentis (in the place of a parent), or any individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in the household of that individual

Amortization payment. In a manufactured home space rental: The monthly debt service payment by the family to amortize the purchase price of the manufactured home.

Annual. Happening once a year.

Annual contributions contract (ACC). The written contract between HUD and a PHA under which HUD agrees to provide funding for a program under the 1937 Act, and the PHA agrees to comply with HUD requirements for the program.

Annual income. All amounts not specifically excluded in 24 CFR 5.609(b), received from all sources by each member of the family who is 18 years of age or older or is the head of household, spouse or cohead, plus unearned income by or on behalf of each dependent who is under 18 years of age.

Applicant (applicant family). A family that has applied for admission to a program but is not yet a participant in the program.

Area exception rent. An amount that exceeds the published FMR. See 24 CFR 982.504(b).

As-paid states. States where the welfare agency adjusts the shelter and utility component of the welfare grant in accordance with actual housing costs.

Assets. (See *net family assets.*)

Auxiliary aids. Services or devices that enable persons with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills to have an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

Biennial. Happening every two years.

Bifurcate. With respect to a public housing or Section 8 lease, to divide a lease as a matter of law such that certain tenants can be evicted or removed while the remaining family members' lease and occupancy rights are allowed to remain intact.

Budget authority. An amount authorized and appropriated by the Congress for payment to 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. *A* member of the family other than the family head or spouse who is under 18 years of age.

Childcare expenses. Amounts anticipated to be paid by the family for the care of children under 13 years of age during the period for which annual income is computed, but only where such care is necessary to enable a family member to actively seek employment, be gainfully employed, or to further their education and only to the extent such amounts are not reimbursed. The amount deducted shall reflect reasonable charges for childcare. In the case of childcare necessary to permit employment, the amount deducted shall not exceed the amount of employment income that is included in annual income.

Citizen. *A* citizen or national of the United States.

Cohead. An individual in the household who is equally responsible for the lease with the head of household. A family may have a cohead or spouse but not both. A cohead never qualifies as a dependent. The cohead must have legal capacity to enter into a lease.

Common space. In shared housing, the space available for use by the assisted family and other occupants of the unit.

Computer match. The automated comparison of databases containing records about individuals.

Confirmatory review. An on-site review performed by HUD to verify the management performance of a PHA.

Consent form. Any consent form approved by HUD to be signed by assistance applicants and participants to obtain income information from employers and SWICAs; return information from the Social Security Administration (including wages, net earnings from self-employment, and retirement income); and return information for unearned income from the IRS. Consent forms expire after a certain time and may authorize the collection of other information to determine eligibility or level of benefits.

Congregate housing. Housing for elderly persons or persons with disabilities that meets the HQS for congregate housing. A special housing type: see 24 CFR 982.606–609.

Contiguous MSA. In portability (under subpart H of part 982): An MSA that shares a common boundary with the MSA in which the jurisdiction of the initial PHA is located.

Continuously assisted. An applicant is continuously assisted under the 1937 Act if the family is already receiving assistance under any 1937 Housing Act program when the family is admitted to the voucher program.

Contract authority. The maximum annual payment by HUD to a PHA for a funding increment.

Cooperative (term includes mutual housing). Housing owned by a nonprofit corporation or association, and where a member of the corporation or association has the right to reside in a particular apartment, and to participate in management of the housing. A special housing type (see 24 CFR 982.619).

Covered families. Statutory term for families who are required to participate in a welfare agency economic self-sufficiency program and who may be subject to a welfare benefit sanction for noncompliance with this obligation. Includes families who receive welfare assistance or other public assistance under a program for which federal, state or local law requires that a member of the family must participate in an economic self-sufficiency program as a condition for the assistance.

Dating violence. Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:

- The length of the relationship
- The type of relationship
- The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship

Day laborer. An individual hired and paid one day at a time without an agreement that the individual will be hired or work again in the future.

De minimis error. An error that results in a difference in the determination of a family's adjusted income of $30 or less per month.

Dependent. A member of the family (except foster children and foster adults) other than the family head or spouse, who is under 18 years of age, or is a person with a disability, or is a full-time student.

Dependent child. In the context of the student eligibility restrictions, a dependent child of a student enrolled in an institution of higher education. The dependent child must also meet the definition of *dependent* as specified above.

Disability assistance expenses. Reasonable expenses that, when combined with health and medical care expenses, exceed 10 percent of annual income and are anticipated, during the period for which annual income is computed, for attendant care and auxiliary apparatus for a disabled family member, and that are necessary to enable a family member (including the disabled member) to be employed, provided that the expenses are neither paid to a member of the family nor reimbursed by an outside source.

Disabled family. A family whose head, cohead, spouse, or sole member is a person with disabilities; two or more persons with disabilities living together; or one or more persons with disabilities living with one or more live-in aides.

Disabled person. See *person with disabilities.*

Disallowance. Exclusion from annual income.

Displaced family. A family in which each member, or whose sole member, is a person displaced by governmental action, or a person whose dwelling has been extensively damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster declared or otherwise formally recognized pursuant to federal disaster relief laws.

Domestic violence. Felony or misdemeanor crimes committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim under the family or domestic violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant funding, and in the case of victim services, includes the user or attempted use of physical abuse or sexual abuse, or a pattern of any other coercive behavior committed, enabled, or solicited to gain or maintain power and control over a victim, including verbal, psychological, economic, or technological abuse that may or may not constitute criminal behavior, by a person who is:

- The current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, or person similarly situated to a spouse or intimate partner of the victim
- A person who is cohabitating or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner
- A person with whom the victim shares a child in common
- A person who commits acts against a youth or adult victim who is protected from those acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction

Domicile. The legal residence of the household head or spouse as determined in accordance with state and local law.

Drug-related criminal activity. The illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, or use of a drug, or the possession of a drug with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute, or use the drug.

Earned income. Income or earnings from wages, tips, salaries, other employee compensation, and net income from self-employment. Earned income does not include any pension or annuity, transfer payments (meaning payments made or income received in which no goods or services are being paid for, such as welfare, social security, and governmental subsidies for certain benefits), or any cash or in-kind benefits.

Economic abuse. Behavior that is coercive, deceptive, or unreasonably controls or restrains a person's ability to acquire, use, or maintain economic resources to which they are entitle, including using coercion, fraud, and manipulation to:

- Restrict a person's access to money, assets, credit, or financial information
- Unfairly use a person's personal economic resources, including money, assets, and credit, for one's own advantage
- Exert undue influence over a person's financial and economic behavior or decisions, including forcing default on joint or other financial obligations, exploiting powers of attorney, guardianship, or conservatorship, or to whom one has a fiduciary duty

***Economic self-sufficiency program*.** Any program designed to encourage, assist, train or facilitate the economic independence of assisted families, or to provide work for such families. Can include job training, employment counseling, work placement, basic skills training, education, English proficiency, Workfare, financial or household management, apprenticeship, or any other program necessary to ready a participant to work (such as treatment for drug abuse or mental health treatment). Includes any work activities as defined in the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 607(d)). Also see 24 CFR 5.603(c).

***Elderly family*.** A family whose head, cohead, spouse, or sole member is a person who is at least 62 years of age; two or more persons who are at least 62 years of age living together; or one or more persons who are at least 62 years of age living with one or more live-in aides.

***Elderly person*.** An individual who is at least 62 years of age.

Eligible family A family that is income eligible and meets the other requirements of the 1937 Act and Part 5 of 24 CFR. See also *family.*

***Employer identification number (EIN)*.** The nine-digit taxpayer identifying number that is assigned to an individual, trust, estate, partnership, association, company, or corporation.

***Evidence of citizenship or eligible status*.** The documents which must be submitted as evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status. See 24 CFR 5.508(b).

Extremely low-income family. A family whose annual income does not exceed the federal poverty level or 30 percent of the median income for the area, whichever number is higher. Area median income is determined by HUD, with adjustments for smaller and larger families. HUD may establish income ceilings higher or lower than 30 percent of median income if HUD finds such variations are necessary due to unusually high or low family incomes. See 24 CFR 5.603.

Fair Housing Act. Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended by the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988.

***Fair market rent (FMR)*.** The rent, including the cost of utilities (except telephone), as established by HUD for units of varying sizes (by number of bedrooms), that must be paid in the housing market area to rent privately owned, existing, decent, safe, and sanitary rental housing of modest (non-luxury) nature with suitable amenities. See periodic publications in the *Federal Register* in accordance with 24 CFR Part 888.

Family. Includes but is not limited to the following, regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status, and can be further defined in PHA policy. Family includes a single person, who may be:

- An elderly person, displaced person, disabled person, near-elderly person, or any other single person;
- An otherwise eligible youth who has attained at least 18 years of age and not more than 24 years of age and who has left foster care, or will leave foster care within 90 days, in accordance with a transition plan described in section 475(5)(H) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 675(5)(H)), and is homeless or is at risk of becoming homeless at age 16 or older; or

Family also includes a group of persons residing together, and such group includes, but is not limited to:

- A family with or without children (a child who is temporarily away from the home because of placement in foster care is considered a member of the family);
- An elderly family;
- A near-elderly family;
- A disabled family;
- A displaced family; and
- The remaining member of a tenant family.

Family rent to owner. In the voucher program, the portion of rent to owner paid by the family.

Family self-sufficiency program (FSS program). The program established by a PHA within its jurisdiction to promote self-sufficiency among participating families, including the coordination of supportive services to these families (24 CFR 984.103).

Family share. The portion of rent and utilities paid by the family. For calculation of family share, see 24 CFR 982.515(a).

Family unit size. The appropriate number of bedrooms for a family, as determined by the PHA under the PHA subsidy standards.

Federal agency. A department of the executive branch of the federal government.

Foster adult. A member of the household who is 18 years of age or older and meets the definition of a foster adult under state law. In general, a foster adult is a person who is 18 years of age or older, is unable to live independently due to a debilitating physical or mental condition, and is placed with the family by an authorized placement agency or by judgment, decree, or other order of any court of competent jurisdiction.

Foster child. A member of the household who meets the definition of a foster child under state law. In general, a foster child is placed with the family by an authorized placement agency (e.g., public child welfare agency) or by judgment, decree, or other order of any court of competent jurisdiction.

Foster childcare payment. A payment to eligible households by state, local, or private agencies appointed by the state to administer payments for the care of foster children.

Full-time student. A person who is attending school or vocational training on a full-time basis (carrying a subject load that is considered full-time for day students under the standards and practices of the educational institution attended). See 24 CFR 5.603.

Funding increment. Each commitment of budget authority by HUD to a PHA under the consolidated annual contributions contract for the PHA program.

Gender identity. Actual or perceived gender-related characteristics.

Gross rent. The sum of the rent to owner plus any utility allowance.

Group home. A dwelling unit that is licensed by a state as a group home for the exclusive residential use of two to twelve persons who are elderly or persons with disabilities (including any live-in aide). (A special housing type: see 24 CFR 982.610–614.)

Handicap. Any condition or characteristic that renders a person an individual with handicaps. (See *person with disabilities*.)

HAP contract. The housing assistance payments contract. A written contract between the PHA and an owner for the purpose of providing housing assistance payments to the owner on behalf of an eligible family.

Head of household. The adult member of the family who is the head of the household for purposes of determining income eligibility and rent.

Health and medical care expenses. Any costs incurred in the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease or payments for treatments affecting any structure or function of the body. Health and medical care expenses include medical insurance premiums and long-term care premiums that are paid or anticipated during the period for which annual income is computed.

Household. A household includes additional people other than the family who, with the PHA's permission, live in an assisted unit, such as live-in aides, foster children, and foster adults.

Housing assistance payment. The monthly assistance payment by a PHA, which includes: (1) A payment to the owner for rent to the owner under the family's lease; and (2) An additional payment to the family if the total assistance payment exceeds the rent to owner.

Housing agency (HA). See *public housing agency.*

HUD. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Human trafficking. A crime involving the exploitation of a person for labor, services, or commercial sex. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 and its subsequent reauthorizations recognize and define two primary forms of human trafficking:

- Sex trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age. See 22 U.S.C. § 7102(11)(A).
- Forced labor is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. See 22 U.S.C. § 7102(11)(B).

Imputed welfare income. An amount of annual income that is not actually received by a family as a result of a specified welfare benefit reduction, but is included in the family's annual income and therefore reflected in the family's rental contribution.

Income for eligibility. Annual income.

Income information means information relating to an individual's income, including:

- All employment income information known to current or previous employers or other income sources
- All information about wages, as defined in the state's unemployment compensation law, including any social security number; name of the employee; quarterly wages of the employee; and the name, full address, telephone number, and, when known, employer identification number of an employer reporting wages under a state unemployment compensation law
- Whether an individual is receiving, has received, or has applied for unemployment compensation, and the amount and the period received
- Unearned IRS income and self-employment, wages, and retirement income
- Wage, social security, and supplemental security income data obtained from the Social Security Administration.

Independent contractor. An individual who qualifies as an independent contractor instead of an employee in accordance with the Internal Revenue Code Federal income tax requirements and whose earnings are consequently subject to the Self-Employment Tax. In general, an individual is an independent contractor if the payer has the right to control or direct only the result of the work and not what will be done and how it will be done.

Individual with handicaps. See *person with disabilities.*

Inflationary index. An index based on the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) used to make annual adjustments to the deduction for elderly disabled families, the cap for imputing returns on assets, the restriction on net family assets, the amount of net assets the PHA may determine based on self-certification by the family, and the dependent deduction.

Initial PHA. In portability, the term refers to both: (1) A PHA that originally selected a family that later decides to move out of the jurisdiction of the selecting PHA; and (2) A 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.

Inside. Under NSPIRE, the inside of HUD housing (or "inside areas") refers to the common areas and building systems that can be generally found within the building interior and are not inside a unit. Examples of "inside" common areas may include, basements, interior or attached garages, enclosed carports, restrooms, closets, utility rooms, mechanical rooms, community rooms, day care rooms, halls, corridors, stairs, shared kitchens, laundry rooms, offices, enclosed porches, enclosed patios, enclosed balconies, and trash collection areas. Examples of building systems include those components that provide domestic water such as pipes, electricity, elevators, emergency power, fire protection, HVAC, and sanitary services.

Institution of higher education. An institution of higher education as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1001 and 1002. See Exhibit 3-2 in this Administrative Plan.

Jurisdiction. The area in which the PHA has authority under state and local law to administer the program.

Landlord. Either the owner of the property or their representative, or the managing agent or their 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.

Life Threatening deficiency. Under NSPIRE, the life-threatening category includes deficiencies that, if evident in the home or on the property, present a high risk of death or severe illness or injury to a resident.

Live-in aide. A person who resides with one or more elderly persons, or near-elderly persons, or persons with disabilities, and who:

- Is determined to be essential to the care and well-being of the persons;
- Is not obligated for the support of the persons; and
- Would not be living in the unit except to provide the necessary supportive services.

Local preference. A preference used by the PHA to select among applicant families.

Low deficiency. Under NSPIRE, deficiencies critical to habitability but not presenting a substantive health or safety risk to resident.

Low-income family. A family whose income does not exceed 80 percent of the median income for the area as determined by HUD with adjustments for smaller or larger families, except that HUD may establish income limits higher or lower than 80 percent for areas with unusually high or low incomes.

Manufactured home. A manufactured structure that is built on a permanent chassis, is designed for use as a principal place of residence, and meets the HQS. (A special housing type: see 24 CFR 982.620 and 982.621.)

Manufactured home space. In manufactured home space rental: A space leased by an owner to a family. A manufactured home owned and occupied by the family is located on the space. See 24 CFR 982.622 to 982.624.

Minor. A member of the family household other than the family head or spouse, who is under 18 years of age.

Mixed family. *A* family whose members include those with citizenship or eligible immigration status, and those without citizenship or eligible immigration status.

Moderate deficiency. Under NSPIRE, this includes deficiencies that, if evident in the home or on the property, present a moderate risk of an adverse medical event requiring a healthcare visit; cause temporary harm; or if left untreated, cause or worsen a chronic condition that may have long-lasting adverse health effects; or that the physical security or safety of a resident or their property could be compromised.

Monthly adjusted income. One twelfth of adjusted income.

Monthly income. One twelfth of annual income.

Mutual housing. Included in the definition of *cooperative.*

National. *A* person who owes permanent allegiance to the United States, for example, as a result of birth in a United States territory or possession.

National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate. HUD's housing inspection approach. NSPIRE is a single inspection standard for all units under the Public Housing, HCV, Multifamily, and Community Planning and Development (CPD) programs. NSPIRE's focus is on the areas that impact residents the most, such as the dwelling unit.

Near-elderly family. A family whose head, spouse, or sole member is a person who is at least 50 years of age but below the age of 62; or two or more persons, who are at least 50 years of age but below the age of 62, living together; or one or more persons who are at least 50 years of age but below the age of 62 living with one or more live-in aides.

Net family assets*.* The net cash value of all assets owned by the family, after deducting reasonable costs that would be incurred in disposing real property, savings, stocks, bonds, and other forms of capital investment. In determining net family assets, PHAs or owners, as applicable, must include the value of any business or family assets disposed of by an applicant or tenant for less than fair market value (including a disposition in trust, but not in a foreclosure or bankruptcy sale) during the two years preceding the date of application for the program or reexamination, as applicable, in excess of the consideration received therefor. In the case of a disposition as part of a separation or divorce settlement, the disposition will not be considered to be for less than fair market value if the applicant or tenant receives consideration not measurable in dollar terms. Negative equity in real property or other investments does not prohibit the owner from selling the property or other investments, so negative equity alone would not justify excluding the property or other investments from family assets.

Noncitizen. *A* person who is neither a citizen nor national of the United States.

Notice of funding availability (NOFA). For budget authority that HUD distributes by competitive process, the *Federal Register* document that invites applications for funding. This document explains how to apply for assistance and the criteria for awarding the funding.

Office of General Counsel (OGC). The General Counsel of HUD.

Outside. Under NSPIRE, outside of HUD housing (or "outside areas") refers to the building site, building exterior components, and any building systems located outside of the building or unit. Examples of "outside" components may include fencing, retaining walls, grounds, lighting, mailboxes, project signs, parking lots, detached garage or carport, driveways, play areas and equipment, refuse disposal, roads, storm drainage, non-dwelling buildings, and walkways. Components found on the exterior of the building are also considered outside areas, and examples may include doors, attached porches, attached patios, balconies, car ports, fire escapes, foundations, lighting, roofs, walls, and windows.

Overcrowded. A unit that does not have at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two persons.

Owner. Any person or entity with the legal right to lease or sublease a unit to a participant.

PHA Plan. The annual plan and the 5-year plan as adopted by the PHA and approved by HUD.

PHA's quality control sample. An annual sample of files or records drawn in an unbiased manner and reviewed by a PHA supervisor (or by another qualified person other than the person who performed the original work) to determine if the work documented in the files or records conforms to program requirements. For minimum sample size see CFR 985.3.

Participant (participant family). A family that has been admitted to the PHA 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. *For the purposes of program eligibility*. A person who has a disability as defined under the Social Security Act or Developmental Disabilities Care Act, or a person who has a physical or mental impairment expected to be of long and indefinite duration and whose ability to live independently is substantially impeded by that impairment but could be improved by more suitable housing conditions. This includes persons with AIDS or conditions arising from AIDS but excludes persons whose disability is based solely on drug or alcohol dependence. *For the purposes of reasonable accommodation.* A person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person regarded as having such an impairment, or a person with a record of such an impairment.

Portability. Renting a dwelling unit with a Section 8 housing choice voucher outside the jurisdiction of the initial 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.

Project owner. The person or entity that owns the housing project containing the assisted dwelling unit.

Public assistance. Welfare or other payments to families or individuals, based on need, which are made under programs funded, separately or jointly, by federal, state, or local governments.

Public housing agency (PHA). Any state, county, municipality, or other governmental entity or public body, or agency or instrumentality of these entities, that is authorized to engage or assist in the development or operation of low-income housing under the 1937 Act.

Qualified census tract. With regard to certain tax credit units, any census tract (or equivalent geographic area defined by the Bureau of the Census) in which at least 50 percent of households have an income of less than 60 percent of Area Median Gross Income (AMGI), or where the poverty rate is at least 25 percent, and where the census tract is designated as a qualified census tract by HUD.

Real property. Real property has the same meaning as that provided under the law of the state in which the property is located.

Reasonable rent. A rent to owner that is not more than rent charged: (1) For comparable units in the private unassisted market; and (2) For comparable unassisted units in the premises.

Reasonable accommodation. A change, exception, or adjustment to a rule, policy, practice, or service to allow a person with disabilities to fully access the PHA's programs or services.

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.

Recertification. Sometimes called *reexamination.* The process of securing documentation of total family income used to determine the rent the tenant will pay for the next 12 months if there are no additional changes to be reported.

Remaining member of the tenant family. The person left in assisted housing who may or may not normally qualify for assistance on their own circumstances (i.e., an elderly spouse dies, leaving widow age 47 who is not disabled).

Rent to owner. The total monthly rent payable to the owner under the lease for the unit (also known as contract rent). Rent to owner covers payment for any housing services, maintenance, and utilities that the owner is required to provide and pay for.

Residency preference. 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 (See *residency preference area*).

Residency preference area. The specified area where families must reside to qualify for a residency preference.

Responsible entity. For the public housing and the Section 8 tenant-based assistance, project-based voucher assistance, and moderate rehabilitation programs, the responsible entity means the 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.

Section 8 covered programs. All HUD programs which assist housing under Section 8 of the 1937 Act, including Section 8 assisted housing for which loans are made under Section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959.

Section 214. Section 214 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1980, as amended.

Section 214 covered programs. The collective term for the HUD programs to which the restrictions imposed by Section 214 apply. These programs are set forth in 24 CFR 5.500.

Security deposit. A dollar amount (maximum set according to the regulations) which can be used for unpaid rent or damages to the owner upon termination of the lease.

Seasonal worker. An individual who is hired into a short-term position and the employment begins about the same time each year (such as summer or winter). Typically, the individual is hired to address seasonal demands that arise for the particular employer or industry.

Set-up charges. In a manufactured home space rental, charges payable by the family for assembling, skirting, and anchoring the manufactured home.

Severe deficiency. Under NSPIRE, the severe category includes deficiencies that, if evident in the home or on the property, present a high risk of permanent disability, or serious injury or illness, to a resident; or the physical security or safety of a resident or their property would be seriously compromised.

Sexual assault. Any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by federal, tribal, or state law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent (42 U.S.C. 13925(a)).

Sexual orientation. Homosexuality, heterosexuality or bisexuality.

Shared housing. A unit occupied by two or more families. The unit consists of both common space for shared use by the occupants of the unit and separate private space for each assisted family. (A special housing type: see 24 CFR 982.615–982.618.)

Single person. A person living alone or intending to live alone.

Single room occupancy housing (SRO). A unit that contains no sanitary facilities or food preparation facilities, or contains either, but not both, types of facilities. (A special housing type: see 24 CFR 982.602–982.605.)

Small rural public housing agency (PHA). Section 38 defines the term "small public housing agency" as a public housing agency "for which the sum of the number of public housing dwelling units administered by the agency and the number of vouchers under section 8(o) administered by the agency is 550 or fewer" and "that predominantly operates in a rural area, as described in section 1026.35(b)(2)(iv)(A) of title 12, Code of Federal Regulations." After consideration of the public comments discussed above, HUD is interpreting "predominantly operates in a rural area" to mean a small PHA that:

(1) Has a primary administrative building with a physical address in a rural area as described in 12 CFR 1026.35(b)(2)(iv)(A); or

(2) more than 50 percent of its combined public housing units and voucher units under section 8(o) are in rural areas as described in 12 CFR 1026.35(b)(2)(iv)(A). HUD also clarifies that voucher units under section 8(o) include those in the tenant-based Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program and the Project-Based Voucher (PBV) program.

Social security number (SSN). The nine-digit number that is assigned to a person by the Social Security Administration and that identifies the record of the person's earnings reported to the Social Security Administration. The term does not include a number with a letter as a suffix that is used to identify an auxiliary beneficiary.

Special admission. Admission of an applicant that is not on the PHA waiting list or without considering the applicant's waiting list position.

Special housing types. See subpart M of part 982. Subpart M states the special regulatory requirements for: SRO housing, congregate housing, group homes, shared housing, cooperatives (including mutual housing), and manufactured homes (including manufactured home space rental).

Specified welfare benefit reduction. Those reductions of welfare benefits (for a covered family) that may not result in a reduction of the family rental contribution. A reduction of welfare benefits because of fraud in connection with the welfare program, or because of welfare sanction due to noncompliance with a welfare agency requirement to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program.

Spouse. The marriage partner of the head of household.

Stalking. To follow, pursue, or repeatedly commit acts with the intent to kill, injure, harass, or intimidate; or to place under surveillance with the intent to kill, injure, harass, or intimidate another person; and in the course of, or as a result of, such following, pursuit, surveillance, or repeatedly committed acts, to place a person in reasonable fear of the death of, or serious bodily injury to, or to cause substantial emotional harm to (1) that person, (2) a member of the immediate family of that person, or (3) the spouse or intimate partner of that person.

State wage information collection agency (SWICA). The state agency, including any Indian tribal agency, receiving quarterly wage reports from employers in the state, or an alternative system that has been determined by the Secretary of Labor to be as effective and timely in providing employment-related income and eligibility information.

Subsidy standards. Standards established by a PHA to determine the appropriate number of bedrooms and amount of subsidy for families of different sizes and compositions.

Suspension. The term on the family's voucher stops from the date the family submits a request for PHA approval of the tenancy, until the date the PHA notifies the family in writing whether the request has been approved or denied. This practice is also called *tolling.*

Tax credit rent. With regard to certain tax credit units, the rent charged for comparable units of the same bedroom size in the building that also receive the low-income housing tax credit but do not have any additional rental assistance (e.g., tenant-based voucher assistance).

Technological abuse. An act or pattern of behavior that occurs within domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and is intended to harm, threaten, intimidate, control, stalk, harass, impersonate, exploit, extort, or monitor another person, except as otherwise permitted by law, that occurs using any form of technology, including but not limited to:

- Internet enabled devices
- Online spaces and platforms
- Computers
- Mobile devices
- Cameras and imaging programs
- Apps
- Location tracking devices
- Communication technologies
- Any other emergency technologies

Tenancy addendum. For the housing choice voucher program, the lease language required by HUD in the lease between the tenant and the owner.

Tenant. The person or persons (other than a live-in aide) who executes the lease as lessee of the dwelling unit.

Tenant rent to owner. See *family rent to owner*.

Term of lease. The amount of time a tenant agrees in writing to live in a dwelling unit.

Total tenant payment (TTP). The total amount the HUD rent formula requires the tenant to pay toward rent and utilities.

Unearned income. Any annual income, as calculated under 24 CFR 5.609, that is not earned income.

Unit. Under NSPIRE, a unit (or "dwelling unit") of HUD housing refers to the interior components of an individual unit. Examples of components included in the interior of a unit may include the balcony, bathroom, call-for-aid (if applicable), carbon monoxide devices, ceiling, doors, electrical systems, enclosed patio, floors, HVAC (where individual units are provided), kitchen, lighting, outlets, smoke detectors, stairs, switches, walls, water heater, and windows.