



HOUSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

Transforming Lives & Communities

CHANGES TO THE 2017 ANNUAL PLAN:

Changes to Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan

Updated References

Changes were made to reference Section numbers that changed and references to procedures that had changed titles. The clean version will be reformatted to correctly re-number all sections.

Record Retention (PG 13)

Shortened to state that Files for past participants leaving the program will be retained in accordance with HHA Record Retention Policy.

Owner Outreach in Low Poverty Areas (PG 15)

Added language to align with SEMAP rules. HHA clearly delineates areas within its jurisdiction that HHA considers areas of poverty, minority concentration and high opportunity areas through periodic map reviews, production of new maps, and analysis of its jurisdiction. These documents are available at HHA's main office upon request.

Eligibility (PG 16)

Criteria for applicant eligibility is defined in further detail later in the Admin Plan. Removed the brief explanation to just state that the Authority's additional criteria for an applicant to be eligible for the Housing Choice Voucher Program can be found in Section IV Part J.

Definition of family and household (PG 17)

The definition of family, sexual orientation, and gender identity were removed because they are already listed in Section XII Definitions of Terms Used in this Administrative Plan.

Family Break-Ups (PG 17)

Added language to #2 to state that if a family breaks up into two otherwise eligible families while receiving assistance, the Vice President of the Voucher Program may in limited circumstances issue a second voucher if removing a voucher would be detrimental to a family.

Local Preferences for Admission (PG 20)

Moved the last paragraph above. It now states Persons transitioning out of Shelter Plus Care/Supportive Housing Programs/Supported Housing Programs/Rapid Re-Housing into permanent housing will be included as a priority group as part of this preference.

If the HHA denies an applicant's preference claim, HHA notifies the applicant and referring service provider in writing, including the reason(s) for the preference denial.

Transition Age Youth (TAY) Aging out of Foster Care Preference for Admission (PG 21)

Increased the number of applicants to from 100 to 200 and increased the annual TAY from 25 to 50 per year.

Special Purpose/Targeted Vouchers (PG 24)

The language previously stated that 95 persons and language was changed to state, HHA has preference housing choice vouchers for up to 100 vouchers plus 20 new vouchers per year to persons with disabilities who are currently living in institutional settings (e.g. nursing homes or assisted living facilities) who wish to return to the community.

Outreach to Potential Applicants before Opening the Waiting List (PG 25)

Removed language that stated the Authority utilizes TTY equipment to facilitate telephone contact for persons who are hearing impaired.

Application Procedures (PG 25)

Removed the Procedure on Applicant Intake and Processing.

Policy on Verification (PG 26)

Language was changed to reflect HUD's new streamlining rule. All language of actual past income was removed.

Denial of Admissions (PG 27)

Removed if the Authority has ever terminated assistance for cause under the Section 8 Existing Housing Program (including the Certificate Program and Voucher Program), Housing Choice Voucher or Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation program the head of household, spouse, co-head or other adult member at the time of the termination of assistance. Also if any member of the family has engaged in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity was changed from five (5) years to three (3) years of the application processing.

Term of the Voucher and Extensions (PG 29-30)

The 120 day maximum time limit on the voucher term was removed. Added the Vice President of the HCV program may make exceptions to the voucher term if the Vice President determines the exception is justified by the family's circumstances. Also added was the authority reserves any and all rights to make decisions on extenuating circumstances as they are presented and based on a case by case basis under the reasons beyond the family's control (#2).

Portability and Moves (PG 30-31)

Changes were made to clarify that we would limit moves to higher cost areas only if the HHA was facing a funding shortfall.

Request for Tenancy Approval (PG 32)

Added language to say The Owner's EIN or social security number (SSN); in the case where the "owner" is a commercial tenant of property, provide SSN and valid copy of Driver's License of the commercial tenant. If the commercial tenant is NOT an individual, provide Driver's License & SSN of the requestor and all controlling interest in the commercial tenant entity.

Additional Inspection Requirements (PG 35-36)

Removed The City of Houston, Code of Ordinances, Chapter 10, and Division 3 of a through f because they are no longer the correct ordinances.

Inspection Policy (PG 36)

Added a Reinspection Fee which is a fee that may be charged; i) if an owner stated that a deficiency had been fixed and the deficiency is found during reinspection to persist or ii) if a reinspection conducted after the expiration of the timeframe for repairs reveals that the deficiency persists. Also updated the reference to an alternate inspections to be in accordance with 24 CFR 982.406.

Emergency Fail Items (PG 37)

Added no hot water to the list.

HHA Decision to Refuse to Enter into Contracts with Certain Owners (PG 39-40)

Added language that states if the owner is a commercial tenant, and the owner has not made its timely lease payment, or is in default of its commercial lease with the land owner. If the owner fails to provide any and all documents requested by HHA for approval of the selected unit. HHA reserves the right to refuse to enter into any contract with certain owners or prospective landlords if it is not in the best interest of HHA's Voucher Program Operations.

Payment Standards and Exceptions to the Payment Standards (PG 42)

Changed the language to HHA will review the payment standard schedule annually and set its payment standards in accordance with current HUD requirements

Utility Allowances and Utility Reimbursements (PG 43)

Language was updated in #3 to say the payment will be made out directly to the tenant.

Family Absences from the Unit (PG 47)

Removed all language about the absent of 14 consecutive days needing to notify and/or approval of the Authority. Also removed language about assistance for the entire household will be terminated if the head of household or spouse or adult child is absent due to incarceration for drug related or violent criminal activity.

Annual Income (PG 61)

Language was changed to reflect HUD's new streamlining rule. All net income from assets is to be based on anticipated income in the next 12 months. Also for families whose assets are less than \$5000, the family may certify to the amount of the asset and amount of income expected from the asset. HHA will obtain third-party verification of all family assets every 3 years starting in year 2017.

Excluded Income (PG 63)

Language was changed to reflect HUD's new streamlining rule. The EID is only applied now for 24 consecutive months and does the 24 month clock does not stop if the participant has a reduction in income.

Adjusted Income (PG 65-66)

Language was changed to reflect HUD's new streamlining rule. Added HUD's new definition and criteria for fixed income families. For any family member with a fixed source of income, HHA will elect to determine that family member's income by a streamlined income determination. Streamline income determination will be conducted by applying, for each fixed-income source, the verified cost of living adjustment (COLA) or current interest to the previously verified or adjusted income amount. Family

member with a fixed income source- family members whose income includes periodic payment at reasonably predictable levels from one or more of the following sources:

- a. Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, Supplemental Disability Insurance;
- b. Federal, state, local or private pension plans
- c. Annuities or other retirement benefits programs, insurance policies, disability or death benefits, or other similar types of periodic receipts;
- d. Any other source of income subject to adjustment by a verifiable COLA or current rate of interest.

HHA will use a COLA or current rate of interest specific to the fixed source of income in order to adjust the income amount. HHA will verify the appropriate COLA or current rate of interest from a public source or through tenant provided, third party generated documentation. If not such verification of income amounts in order to calculate the change in income for the source. For Fixed Income Families HHA will obtain third party verification of all income amounts every 3 years starting in 2017.

Reasonable Accommodations (PG 76-77)

Made the Reasonable Accommodations Policy Attachment A.

Language Assistance Plan & Limited English Proficiency Policy (PG 77-81)

Removed the policy from the Admin Plan and made the Language Assistance Plan and Limited English Proficiency Policy Attachment B.

Definitions of Terms Used In This Administrative Plan (PG 77-81)

Updated the definition of family and added the definition of a family member with a fixed source of income.

Changes to Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan (ACOP)

Updated References

Changes were made to reference Section numbers that changed and references to procedures that had changed titles. The clean version will be reformatted to correctly re-number all sections.

Removing Applicants from the Waiting List (PG 5)

Changed criminal background check to screening criteria to be consistent with cross-references in the document.

The Preference System (PG 7)

Removed the working preference from Heatherbrook.

Applicant Screening Criteria (PG 8)

Changed from screening applicants for admissions to applicant screening criteria.

Additions to and Deletions from the Resident Household and Household (PG 15)

Updated #2 to say Generally HHA will approve the addition of a household member when that individual passes screening and does not result in the household becoming larger than the maximum occupancy limit of the current unit.

Annual Income (PG 20)

Language was changed to reflect HUD's new streamlining rule. For a Household with net assets equal to or less than \$5,000, for recertification of income, HHA will accept a household's self-certification. The self-certification must state the amount of income the family expects to receive from such assets and this amount must be included in the family's income. HHA will obtain third-party verification of all family assets every 3 years starting in year 2017.

Anticipating Annual Income (PG 20)

Language was changed to reflect HUD's new streamlining rule. HHA will use anticipated income for a 12 month period. If it is not feasible to anticipate income for a 12-month period, the Authority may use the annualized income anticipated for a shorter period, subject to an Interim Adjustment at the end of the shorter period. (This method would be used for school bus drivers or classroom aides who are only paid for 9 months, or for tenants receiving unemployment compensation.)

Fixed Income Families (PG 21)

Language was changed to reflect HUD's new streamlining rule. Added HUD's new definition and criteria for fixed income families. For any family member with a fixed source of income, HHA will elect to determine that family member's income by a streamlined income determination. Streamline income determination will be conducted by applying, for each fixed-income source, the verified cost of living adjustment (COLA) or current interest to the previously verified or adjusted income amount. Family member with a fixed income source- family members whose income includes periodic payment at reasonably predictable levels from one or more of the following sources:

- a. Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, Supplemental Disability Insurance;
- b. Federal, state, local or private pension plans
- c. Annuities or other retirement benefits programs, insurance policies, disability or death benefits, or other similar types of periodic receipts;
- d. Any other source of income subject to adjustment by a verifiable COLA or current rate of interest.

HHA will use a COLA or current rate of interest specific to the fixed source of income in order to adjust the income amount. HHA will verify the appropriate COLA or current rate of interest from a public source or through tenant provided, third party generated documentation. If not such verification of income amounts in order to calculate the change in income for the source. For Fixed Income Families HHA will obtain third party verification of all income amounts every 3 years starting in 2017.

Flat Rents (PG 23)

Updated language to allow the use of 80% of HUDs published Small Area Market Rents.

Interim Changes in Household Composition (PG 28)

Split the old #3 into two separate sentences to make clearer. They now read as follows. All adults who are proposed for addition to a household or household must be screened for eligibility. All adults who are

proposed for addition to a household or household must not overcrowd the unit.

Earned Income Disallowances (PG 28-29)

Language was changed to reflect HUD's new streamlining rule. The EID is only applied now for 24 consecutive months and does the 24 month clock does not stop if the participant has a reduction in income.

Resident Initiated Transfers (PG 30)

Language was changed to say voluntary transfers made to lease compliant residents who have been in their current apartments for at least a year and that do not meet any of the above requirements will be denied.

Priorities for Transfers (PG 31)

Resident initiated transfers (non-emergency) was removed from the list.

Reasonable Accommodations (PG 37-43)

The Reasonable Accommodations Policy was removed from the ACOP and can be found in Attachment A.

Language Assistance Plan & Limited English Proficiency Policy (PG 44-48)

The Language Assistance Plan & Limited English Proficiency Policy was removed from the ACOP and can be found in Attachment B.

Definitions of Terms Used In This Administrative Plan (PG 48-57)

Updated the definition of family and added the definition of a family member with a fixed source of income.